

BUSINESS AND CONSCIOUSNESS : SOME NOTES AND REFERENCES

HOW CAN HIGHER CONSCIOUSNESS PROVIDE A NEW GROUND FOR BUSINESS?

- ✕ Higher consciousness work is training in the role of intention in directing how evolution unfolds, providing a foundation for a higher frequency of life. The work helps us to sense into our larger individual and collective potential, and to begin to explore and embody this.

These are some core aspects:

- ✕ **Fields of consciousness.** Learning about fields of consciousness from the inside, becoming more equipped to work creatively within organisational fields. We gain insight into inner spaces of experience and perceive ourselves and others at a deeper level. We learn to attune to collective fields, experiencing any collective structure or system from the inside.
- ✕ **The Self and the field.** Learning how to work systemically from a field-based understanding of the self and its relationship to others, we observe and accompany phenomena as they arise, working with courage, vulnerability and insight, and allowing process to lead us more organically towards action.¹
- ✕ **Group processes.** Learning how to release our dependency on disembodied knowledge, we begin to feel into and to intuitively shape group and organisational processes, to 'establish connectivity and relationship, design new sustainable working models, and harness individual commitment.'² We note that awareness can "characterise the group mind as well. We need highly evolved people and completely awake organisations in which everyone participates, knowing when to be quiet or noisy, joining in the mad cacophony of voices and at the same time capable of detaching from the compelling nature of the field."³
- ✕ **Social competence.** We become more socially and affectively competent: aware of our responsibility to inquire into more of ourselves and to make this more available, consciously bringing shadow aspects into the light, on an individual and on a group level. In doing so, we learn how to cultivate clarity and authenticity around us, nurturing a more transparent field.
- ✕ **Creativity and innovation.** We discover and explore the true nature of creativity and the source of inspiration, and thereby how to become clearer channels for innovation and co-creative breakthrough, and how to support others in this process. Through qualities of presence we learn to tap into, access, and download future potential, so that this may be made available and realised in the present in sustainable ways.

THROUGH WHAT KINDS OF DEVELOPMENTAL WORK COULD THE ABOVE ASPECTS BE EXPRESSED?

- ✕ **Leadership Development** which attracts strong interest and research opportunities and where 'the mainstream meets the fringe' and the less-orthodox.
- ✕ **Identification and development of higher potential in people and places**, where research is driven by the corporate sector: keen to find and to attempt to cultivate those qualities in people most likely to be facilitative of change and organisational transformation. Here, however, we are framing higher-potential as a property of the field rather than of individuals, and within evolutionary terms.
- ✕ **Organisational Unfoldment**, where we guide processes which reveal where an organisational field is open to further emergence and how this might best be helped, working to support people to release their creative potential and to catalyse strategic and cultural change. Blockages and entanglements, individual and organisational shadow areas⁴ - and places of higher-potential - are revealed and explored.

¹ Eckhart Tolle reminds us that "We are also learning that action, although necessary, is only a secondary factor in manifesting external reality. The primary factor in creation is consciousness. No matter how active we are, how much effort we make, our state of consciousness creates our world, and if there is no change on that inner level, no amount of action will make any difference. We would only re-create modified versions of the same world again and again, a world that is an external reflection of ego." (in "A New Earth" Michael Joseph, 2005).

² GRLI (Globally Responsible Leadership Initiative): "The Globally Responsible Leader: A Call for Action" 2008.

³ Arnold Mindell: "The Leader as Martial Artist: Techniques and Strategies for Resolving Conflict and Creating Community" Lao Tse Press, 1992.

⁴ "Most of our organizations, including our corporations, endure some degree of bureaucracy where the focus is more on the internal pathologies of their co-workers and less on the needs of their customers. Most organizations have developed a tolerance for certain shadows or dark behaviours that detract

- ✘ **Co-creating We-Culture workplaces**, where the potential for a radically different kind of human community is explored and experienced, and where it may begin to become embodied in people's lives thereby cultivating a field which will further support a group in its collective unfoldment.⁵
- ✘ **Crisis intervention**, where we work creatively to transform obstacles, conflict, and stuck, shadowy, areas into places of potential, resource, breakthrough and transformation, or with insight we may allow something to reach the end of its life-cycle. We "step outside the familiar, much-visited places and into the hidden territory of the intrapersonal, collective and the transpersonal domains where the solutions may actually be found."⁶ Arnold Mindell reminds us that "problems and conflicts are like dreams, forever recreating themselves, challenging us with new potentials and situations for development until we become completely fluid."⁷

HOW DOES THE MAINSTREAM BUSINESS CONTEXT PROVIDE POTENTIAL FOR HIGHER CONSCIOUSNESS WORK?

- ✘ The dominant model of competitive economic growth in our industrialised societies is increasingly called into question. Despite this, working life continues to be organised largely through habit, driven by concepts such as control and predictability, performance and productivity, scarcity and standardization, and faster-is-better, "which continue to re-create institutions as they have been, despite their increasing disharmony with the larger world,"⁸ a pattern which is maintained in place by a view of the self framed primarily in economic terms.
- ✘ The mainstream workplace is not a very flexible, responsive, collaborative, inspiring or innovative place to be. It succeeds only very partially in mobilising people's intelligence, skills, wisdom and imagination. There is a growing feeling of disillusion and of stuckness there as things fall apart, and a feeling in many people that somewhere there is a possibility of living and working together completely differently.
- ✘ The free-market economic model "pollutes, excludes, and often encourages domination and social injustice. It promotes a desperate race that no longer has any visible purpose or *raison d'être* beyond the race itself or beyond shareholder value - at whatever societal cost."⁹ It has lost its moral and political legitimacy and there are now "fundamental questions about our competence in key areas of governance, economy and sustainability. We are struggling as professionals and in our private lives to meet the demands [which our post-modern societies are] placing on traditional models of organisation, understanding and action. The anchors of identity, morality, cultural coherence and social stability are unravelling and we are losing our bearings."¹⁰

WHAT ARE THE ALTERNATIVES TO THE DOMINANT MODELS?

- ✘ There are alternatives to the prevailing economic and social models, other ways of organizing ourselves at work and of doing business together that depend upon our individual and collective level of awareness. They suggest new forms of social architecture characterised by collective intelligence and transparency, for instance: "a gift economy, a high learning capacity, a convergence of interest between the individual and collective levels, interactions characterized by human warmth, and an excellent capability to handle complexity and the unexpected."¹¹
- ✘ While mainstream society seems unable to respond to the challenge of more sustainable patterns of development, all over the world innovative experiences and approaches are developing "where enterprises seek to build long-term, mutually beneficial relationships with all of their stakeholders and try to produce values for their whole business ecosystem."¹²

from them being as effective as enterprises and vital as workplaces. They've become resigned to this less-than-fully-functional state as the best they can do under the circumstances, a condition that gives rise to mediocrity and low morale (John Renesch: "The Conscious Organization: Workplace for the Self-Actualized" <http://consciousorganizations.wikispaces.com>).

⁵ Thomas Hübl has described a 'We-Culture' as "a higher evolutionary state shared by people together, with another level of thinking, of feeling, of motivation, and where innovative possibilities can come through, and with another level of collective intelligence." (Interview by Stephen Busby & Nadasree Gadas, 2008).

⁶ Judith Hemming & Geoff Mead: "Systemic Coaching" 2009.

⁷ Arnold Mindell: "The Leader as Martial Artist: Techniques and Strategies for Resolving Conflict and Creating Community" Lao Tse Press, 1992.

⁸ Peter Senge, C. Otto Scharmer, Joseph Jaworski & Betty Sue Flowers: "Awakening Faith in an Alternative Future: A Consideration of Presence, Human Purpose and the Field of the Future" in Reflections: Society for Organisational Learning's Journal on Knowledge, Learning & Change: 5:7, 2004.

⁹ GRLI (Globally Responsible Leadership Initiative): "The Globally Responsible Leader: A Call for Action" 2008.

¹⁰ International Futures Forum: http://www.internationalfuturesforum.com/conceptual_emergency.php

¹¹ Jean-François Noubel: "Collective Intelligence: The Invisible Revolution" TheTransitioner.org, 2004.

¹² "The Collaborative Enterprise: Creating Values for a Sustainable World" Bocconi University, June 2008.

WHAT IS THE CALL TO HIGHER POTENTIAL IN THE WORKPLACE?

- ✘ We invoke new kinds of organisations and business communities where everyone is called toward their highest evolutionary potential and where it is understood that the unfoldment of a group's highest potential may only be realised through the potential of each of its members. In such places, each person feels called to 'act in the service of what is emerging so that new intuitions and insights create new realities.'¹³
- ✘ An organisation evolving in this way will be naturally 'attracted to the future and to exploring unknown capacities. It is open to stepping into new levels of perception, enhancing both individual and societal evolution.'¹⁴ It will be a place where people are drawn to serve the deeper unfolding social purpose of their workplace rather than only the achievement of its immediate goals; in other words: a place where social responsibility is a first value.

WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MAINSTREAM WORKPLACE?

- ✘ The prevailing and relatively recent cultural paradigm of individualism at work and in mainstream society makes it very difficult for most people to accept (or to imagine) that there could be an 'I' without an 'us'.¹⁵ A focus upon individualism - of the person and of the organisation - 'alone and struggling' within a potentially hostile or competitive environment - means that we continue to evaluate success in terms of performance and competitive advantage. "Our ways of managing and measuring performance are still extremely individualistic. We still behave as if performance is all about personal skills and competencies, individual attitude, solo capability. We still rarely measure outcomes in terms of the whole system's well-being. We still fix parts without attending to the whole."¹⁶
- ✘ This habit is said to arise from a mechanistic mindset: mind as a "determinate machine which, in order to know: isolates and identifies those objects and events, finds the simplest possible predictive contingencies between them, stores the results through time in memory, relates the items in memory to each other such that they form a coherent but indirect representation of the world and oneself, and retrieves those representations in order to fulfil the only originating value, which is to survive and reproduce in an evolutionarily successful manner."¹⁷ The techno-rational decision-making processes which result from such a mindset 'are predicated upon individualist, reductionist, analytical principles alone, and seek to improve parts while compounding problems for the greater wholes upon which those parts depend. The outcomes are never sustainable and are invariably damaging in the longer term.'¹⁸
- ✘ Outside of the rational worldview of management science, outside of most of business schools, MBA programmes and boardrooms, there is however a growing appreciation that 'decision makers are not simply observers but also participants who cannot abdicate from personal ethical considerations and ultimate responsibility even in the face of uncertainty.'¹⁹

HOW DOES HIGHER CONSCIOUSNESS WORK HELP TO CULTIVATE A WE-CULTURE IN THE WORKPLACE?

- ✘ The field of work we are invoking here is essentially an inquiry process that can lead people to experience and understand their work, themselves, their organisations, the wider environment, and life, very differently.
- ✘ The work can lead people towards a more collaborative transcendent view of reality, and can help them to develop an appetite for "exploring the capacity to work 'beyond the door' together with others... They are sharing their learning, building up an account of what lies 'beyond the door' and creating an emerging bridge of understanding about how we can each move forward - both from within our tradition and yet transcending it in deep connection with others."²⁰

¹³ Peter Senge, C. Otto Scharmer, Joseph Jaworski & Betty Sue Flowers: "Awakening Faith in an Alternative Future: A Consideration of Presence, Human Purpose and the Field of the Future" in Reflections: Society for Organisational Learning's Journal on Knowledge, Learning and Change: 5:7, 2004.

¹⁴ Thomas Hübl: "The Evolution of Community" 2008.

¹⁵ Ty Francis: "The Challenges of Organisational Constellations" in: Self & Society, 33:4, 32-40, 2006.

¹⁶ Ty Francis: "The Challenges of Organisational Constellations" in: Self & Society, 33:4, 32-40, 2006.

¹⁷ Eleanor Rosch in conversation with C.O. Scharmer: "Primary Knowing: When Perception Happens from the Whole Field" University of California, Berkeley, October 15, 1999. www.dialogonleadership.org

¹⁸ Ty Francis: "Working with the Field" in: British Gestalt Journal 14:1, 26-33, 2005.

¹⁹ Tony Hodgson: "Decision Integrity and 2nd Order Cybernetics" SOL, 2009.

²⁰ Bryce Taylor: "Promoting Participatory Spiritual Inquiry" Oasis School of Human Relations, 2009.

- X “This is the basis for a ‘new We’. The next evolutionary step for humankind as a whole contains a new dimension of We - one that is characterised by less interpersonal friction and thus emanates a higher potential of collective intelligence.”²¹ ... “If we all dive more and more into possible transparency, a new reality will be created and we will have deep insights into what we call connectedness and unity. We then will be connected with each other like never before, because our personalities will not be filtering away the majority of information.”²²
- X Eventually we come to an embodied experience of a We-Space which “is neither the group mind nor the individual but the space they create together.”²³

WHAT IS THE NEW SYNTHESIS OF HIGHER CONSCIOUSNESS WORK FOR BUSINESS AND THE WORLD?

- X Essentially we are “finding a way to surrender deeply enough so that [we] each can operate as a vehicle for tapping the deepest Source and then become an instrument for that Source. Through working so intensively together, [a collective can begin] to develop a new capacity to operate as a single intelligence”²⁴ (“the collective intelligence of a group organism comes alive”²⁵), and this is what our works seeks to help other people to do.

How are we changing through this work?

- X We are learning to **work with subtle energies**, and thereby to tune into fields of consciousness, so that we may best allow a sense of what work needs to be done there to come to us, and so that we may know how and when to act, in order to facilitate movement and healing which leads to sustainable change. John Heron describes “the self-transfiguring person as one who has embarked upon the realization of their subtle energies, psychic capacities and spiritual potentials. They are busy with transformations of ordinary perception and action, extra sensory development and access to other realities, ritual, meditation, prayer, worship, and living in the now. And all this is integrated with a creative, expressive life in the world.”²⁶
- X We are learning to ‘**hold energetic containers**’ - to work explicitly with energetic and vibrational levels and process in personal/group settings, facilitating insight and awareness, and promoting intelligence and artistry in the workplace. “The work is about being sensitive to the inherent possibilities for change and development, tracking and directing the energy of a group or a whole system, and edging the emerging process towards the next possible step.”²⁷
- X We are learning to **read information** from the deeper field – and to respond to it in ways that honour the life-energy and the message in it: what does it require of us, where does it lead us, where does its intelligence meet our own...?
- X We are learning to **be awake** more of the time, with more of ourselves. Thomas Hübl writes of: “strengthening an integrated form of awakesness and presence in us, transforming us into power centres in the network of life. It is in periods of crisis that we need people who do not fall into identification with their ego but instead stay alert and in contact in stressful times. When enough people dwell in such a state of consciousness they represent an enormous stabilization in the collective field. The effect of this is that more awake decisions are taken, that we can still sustain a compassionate respect for our fellow human beings, that we continue to take in ‘the whole’, beyond our own life-radius.”²⁸ Staying awake leads to “an objective alertness that notices inner experiences and outer events but can also lead to emptiness and free, creative action... It [also] means the capacity to temporarily enter any one of the streams of life. It means remembering our whole selves in the midst of chaos...”²⁹

²¹ Thomas Hübl, 2008.

²² Thomas Hübl, interview with Stefan Tolksdorf, February 2007.

²³ Bryce Taylor: “Evolutionary Consciousness – Next steps” Oasis School of Human Relations, 2009.

²⁴ Joseph Jaworski in: “A Fractal of Consciousness” What Is Enlightenment <http://www.enlightennext.org/magazine/j28/fractal.asp>

²⁵ Thomas Hübl: “The Evolution of Community” 2008.

²⁶ John Heron: “Spiritual inquiry as divine becoming” in ReVision, Washington, 2001; and “Feeling and Personhood” Sage, 1992.

²⁷ Ty Francis: “Working with the Field” in: British Gestalt Journal 14:1, 26-33, 2005.

²⁸ Thomas Hübl: “Regression in Recession” 2009 http://www.thomashuebl.com/imgs/pdf/regression_during_recession.pdf

²⁹ Arnold Mindell: “The Leader as Martial Artist: Techniques and Strategies for Resolving Conflict and Creating Community” Lao Tse Press, 1992.