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What We Got Wrong About Business

**A Collection of Essays
Rethinking How We
Approach Work**

**Contributed by Members of the Higher Ground Community
Edited by Dr. Lance Secretan**

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Preface

The Higher Ground Community consists of a diverse, global group of professional coaches, trainers, consultants, psychologists, marketers, educators, therapists, pastors, C-suite executives and more, who have completed a rigorous certification in Higher Ground Leadership® and who are united in serving the world by raising individual levels of inspiration and performance. They are known as “Pathfinders”. You can learn more about them here and their biographies can be found at the end of this eBook.

This project was spurred by the growing awareness that business is falling short in its capacity to inspire employees and contribute positively to liberal democracies, and to the world.

Part of the problem has been the continued adherence

to industrial age thinking that still defines leadership and which overlooks the need to serve the spiritual, emotional and physical well-being of employees. The illusion of separate worlds—life and work—is still believed and practiced by many—to the detriment of all. The opening essay explains the problem and the solution. The other 26 essays explore many aspects of this challenge and how we can solve it.

The essays in this eBook all show different ways in which the Pathfinders are using concepts that enhance the human—regardless of what context they happen to be in. There is just one human domain—it is called life, and work is just one part of that human experience. We want to be loved and appreciated in all aspects of our lives, and leaders who adapt to this philosophy will be rewarded by whole human **BEings**. This will change the world.

What We Got Wrong About Business

By Lance Secretan

After 60 years of leading, coaching and teaching at the highest levels of corporate life, I think I have finally realized what is making business a less than inspiring experience for so many people: business is a deviant. Business functions in completely different ways compared to the rest of our lives.

Most organizations (corporate, government, healthcare, academic, not-for-profit) have behaviors, codes, tribal practices, vernacular, and cultures that are unique and rarely found in the rest of life. Consider this:

1. I can say “I love you” to anyone in the world—even a stranger—without impunity. But I cannot say it at work, where there are penalties for doing so. I can hug and offer a comforting embrace to my friends, but not my co-workers.
2. Business has an exclusive tribal code, a jargon, a sort of “corporate-speak,” that we seldom use elsewhere: KPIs, metrics, reach out, touch base, shifting paradigm, leveraging best practices, consumer, war room, deliverables, drilling down, low-hanging fruit, benchmarks, content providers, laser-focused, mission-critical, and so on.
3. We do things in business that would be abhorrent anywhere else in our lives: would

you conduct a “performance review” with your spouse? Or an “exit interview”? Would you hold your spouse “accountable”?

4. Our workplaces require drug tests, surveillance, being cancelled or fired. Would you do (or even tolerate) these actions anywhere else in your life, outside of work?
5. Would you distribute income as unevenly in your family as we do in corporate life (the average CEO made 299 times more income than the average worker in 2020)?

Covid, and working from home, lit the fuse for “the great resignation”—some 25 million people have quit their jobs. Executives are scrambling to stem the exodus of employees by bribing them with higher wages, in the hope that this will reverse the trend. But the number one reason employees are quitting is not their pay—it is their desire to, “no longer work in toxic workplaces.” People have experienced the joy of leaving their fragmented, abstruse, and artificial work-lives that are completely separate and different from the rest of their human experiences.

As I have written elsewhere¹, I recently conducted a study of business literature and management journals to discover the most-often referenced “top qualities of an ideal a leader.” Here, alphabetically arranged, is a composite list of what I found (*Figure 1*).

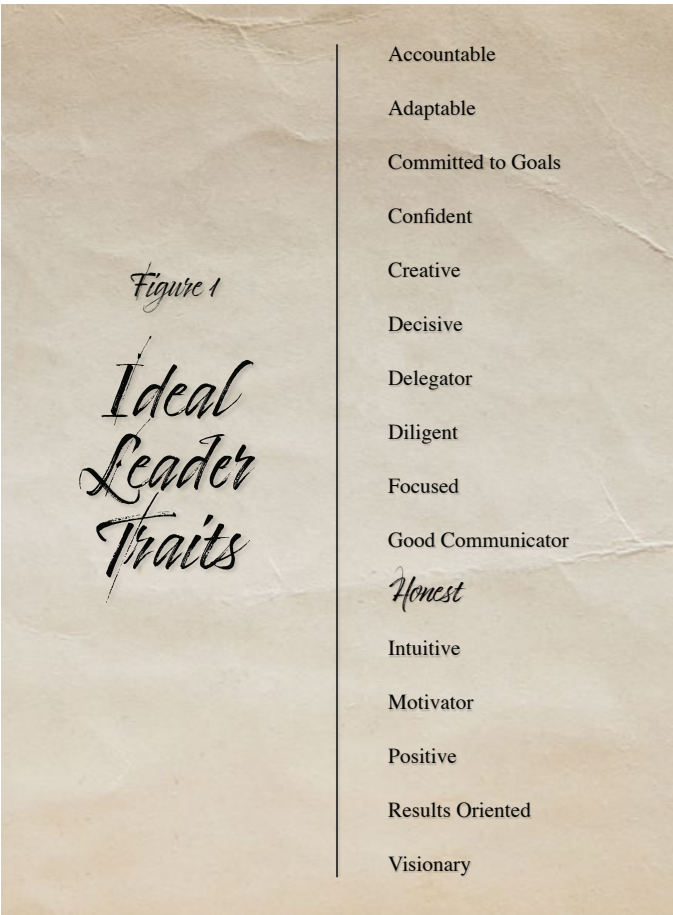
Next, I researched the top qualities that individuals ascribe to their partners in an ideal relationship or marriage. Here, alphabetically arranged, is a composite list of what I discovered (Figure 2).

It is striking how different these two lists are from each other. The list does have one similarity—honesty—but for the rest, they are markedly different. It is as if we are expected to behave as two different people—as a leader on the one hand, and as a spouse, parent, or friend on the other. Of course, this is an illusion—as if it were possible for us to wake up in the morning as Doctor Jekyll, then go to work as Mr. Hyde (Goodbye, Honey, I’m going to work to be accountable, decisive, focused, and visionary!), and then return as Doctor Jekyll (Hi, Honey, I’m home; I’m going to be empathetic, intimate, loving, passionate, and vulnerable!). It is hard for an authentic person to live a double life. As Gandhi observed, “One man cannot do right in one department of life whilst he is occupied in doing wrong in any other department. Life is one indivisible whole.” And yet we are requiring people to live double lives every day.

It is time to rethink our entire approach to this thing we call “work”. If we reassessed our view of work as just another dimension of our existing, rich tapestry of human relationships, we could change everything. If we viewed the assembled group of people as, to paraphrase Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, spiritual beings having a human experience, how would work look then? How might we transform capitalism?

And the challenge is that capitalism, at least as we have known it, is at risk, because it is no longer meeting the needs of a large segment of society. The greatest number of people favor changes to address climate change, but business lobbies keep spending feverishly to promote the continued use of fossil fuels. The 2022 Edelman Trust Barometer² shows that 48% of respondents feel that government is a divisive force; 49% distrust CEOs; 42% say that business promotes systemic injustices, 63% say that business is purposely misleading people; 52%

¹ *The Bellwether Effect*, Lance Secretan, The Secretan Center Inc., 2018, pages 15-16





say that capitalism does more harm than good. This last item is particularly disturbing because while business (capitalism) is the underpinning foundation of democracy, the same survey shows that only 43% of US and 44% of UK respondents trust their own democracies. All this adds up to a growing existential risk to our societies.

Some good news, though—sort of—is that government is even less trusted than business. This suggests that it might be more useful to humanize business first, before we turn our attention to doing the same with government. Since business is the most powerful force in a free society, it represents the most useful lever for changing everything. Thus, if we recalibrate the values, culture, moral code, and social contribution of the people who are the sum of “business” at an individual level, we will raise the caliber, contribution—and future survival—of us all, including business.

The essays that follow are contributed by members of the Higher Ground Community®³ who are a passionate group of souls on fire committed to “Creating a More Inspired World”. Each contributor (see their details at the end of this eBook) has written about their own perspective on how these seemingly different worlds are really one, and how to make that a reality for everyone, and therefore change the world.

² <https://www.edelman.com/trust/2022-trust-barometer>

³ <https://secretan.com/higher-ground-community-membership/>

Leading During Times of Extreme Fear

By Jeff Altman ☺

Fear is a typical occurrence in the workplace.

Is it possible for me to meet my KPIs?

Will I be able to meet or exceed my sales targets?

Can we fulfill the coding goals in time to deliver the project early and make our users think we're heroes?

Will marketing enable us/me to be viewed as a leader with revenue-generating campaigns?

Will we be able to get the materials we need to manufacture our products and deliver them to our customers?

These are common anxieties that produce what we call "normal stress," which can lead to burnout over time.

However, staff and leaders can endure acute shocks with cortisol spikes, weight gain, substance addiction,

and interpersonal troubles at home and work during times of extreme upheaval, such as high inflation, real or threatened foreign conflict, or internal unrest. Everyone starts asking inquiries because they want to know something they don't know. What can we do when we don't have a playbook to follow?

1. Schedule regular meetings with your valued advisors and/or coach. You'll need to seek advice from people you can trust. It's not a good idea to go it alone.
2. Concentrate on your people. You owe it to them to keep them up to date on any options you are considering. Inquire about their opinions as well.
3. Pay attention and reflect. Leaders believe that their actions earned them the title of leader. Their capacity to inspire trust and discernment has landed them in that position.
4. Pay attention to what others have done. What worked for you? What went wrong?

Leadership Lessons from the New York Marathon

By Jeff Altman ☺

When I lived in New York City, I would watch the runners over the last mile of the New York Marathon from Central Park South. Hundreds of runners would finish ahead of the first female runner to cross the finish line. Is their achievement any less because we don't know their name? They may not have won, but their efforts make them champions, too.

Professionally, too often, people are treated like those marathoners—invisible, taken for granted or, worse yet, ignored because they didn't make the presentation, their name was not on the report, or they are not “leaders.” They are the backbone of your group, your organization, and business. They follow you because they trust you and deliver the effort and results that allow you to stand on their shoulders.

Why is it so hard to say thank you to them with eye contact and sincerity? How did we forget we were once them, working for a crumb of notice by our leader?

They deserve your love. They deserve your honoring of, and support for achieving their goals, rather than

being treated as unimportant. Now is the time to pay forward that generosity you received, because you have learned how important this is.

Doing so does not involve teaching a course to them, or formally mentoring them, although those are terrific things to do.

Start with caring enough to notice their successes and challenges.

“I’ve noticed you have an enormous upside (if that’s true). What can I do to support you?”

“I see you seem to be struggling. What can I do to help?”

That last question was the one my coach asked me when I ran and finished the New York Marathon. It made a difference.

The Mandala of Working and Living

By Ellen Brakel

My daily life has taken on the form of a mandala. The center of the mandala is love and my relationship to myself. As my day goes on, I move outward slowly, integrating with my family, clients, work and community. With the sun setting I focus back on my family and finish the day back into the center and myself.

I have always needed time to reflect in order to build my reserves of energy. Drawing mandalas, journaling, Yoga, Qigong and meditation began when I was pregnant with my first child. I use this time to focus on balancing my emotions and healing my body. I instinctively knew I would need this to reduce stress throughout motherhood and my work life. It has served me well to begin and end my day this way.

This balanced and peaceful mindset helped me recently in a situation with my husband/ business partner. He was having a very stressful day and was triggered by a situation that made him angry. He started venting to me after I had just finished a long day of sessions with some challenging clients. I just

wanted to make dinner and relax.

As he spoke, he tried to hook me into his anger. In my tiredness, I could have engaged, but because of my meditation practice, chose to neither repel or engage in the anger and focused on relaxing and breathing out stress for myself and my partner. I listened and shared a few words of insight, but he wasn't ready to hear what I said. He just wanted to be angry and righteous. I realized I needed a time out.

I excused myself and went to quietly make dinner. While I was cooking, I chose to transform the feeling of anger into compassion for myself and my husband. I focused on this instead of feeling hurt from his anger.

My partner took some time to reflect in another room. A little while later he came to me and confessed his own feelings of stress from events of the day and week that had built up and asked me for a hug. We discussed things further when we were both more relaxed and neutral.



Change Requires Courage

By Lynnette Embree ☺

The quote by Mary Anne Radmacher “Change of any sort requires courage” rings so true. Most people will say that they do not like change. Yet, change happens every day of our lives. Courage is required if we want to change a daily habit or a situation, we find ourselves in.

How do we gather courage? Courage is like a muscle—the more courageous we are, the more our courage will grow.

For example, my father once told me that if I did not agree with something that was being said or done, I should voice my opinion—respectfully. He went on to say that there are probably others feeling the same way but are hesitant to say anything because they are afraid of being ridiculed or being made to feel like a fool.

I began by sharing my thoughts and feelings about

minor matters, those with which I didn’t necessarily agree, and was indifferent to the outcome. Little by little, my courage muscle grew. I began to share my thoughts with a wider community and sometimes, my voice did change the outcome.

When we are courageous, aren’t we also being our authentic selves? I, like most of us prefer others to be authentic. It is easy to notice when another person is not telling the truth or being who they really are. And all of these things take courage.

Recently, I took time to share my opinion about something with which I disagreed. I have also become more intentional about the foods I eat. What is the connection between voicing an opinion and changing eating habits? They are both about making changes, and that takes courage.

Be courageous!

Are You a Toxic Leader? Give Your Own Head a Shake!

By David Fisher ☺

Have you felt like you work in a toxic workplace because of the behaviors of others? Have you found success in parts of your life, yet you still strive to find sustained happiness and joy? Are you highly effective at work, yet you wonder why you feel empty even when you achieve your targets and goals?

How would it feel if you became fully conscious, if you had a clear idea, and a better understanding of the part you play in making the world a better place?

Our constant push to motivate for “more” in our business and in our lives, the inevitable self judgement and sense of emptiness that results really does affect us all as leaders... but what can you do?

It is not healthy to stop “feeling what you feel,” or constantly be “thinking about what goal should come next” in your life. Nor can you control what others think or feel about you. You will always judge both yourself, and others, and this judgement-

based leadership style may have always been a part of what drives, motivates and pushes you. In fact, most leaders have been taught that manipulating, exploiting and controlling the behaviour of others should be a key trait of those who lead.

The truth is... the negativity bouncing around in your head, is actually created by you. Which means that you ultimately have the power to control it. We cannot inspire others unless we let go of our own fears. Leaders who inspire have grown beyond just thinking about themselves.

The CASTLE® Principles, identified by Dr. Lance Secretan in his books, provide us all with a way to shift our mindset from managing through motivation, to leading through inspiration. This simple mental shift enables us to be drawn towards reacting to circumstances in a much more positive and impactful way.

Love and Business— a Strange Brew

By Lynnea Hagen ☺

James Taylor sang, “Shower the people you love with love”...why? Because without love, relationships wither and die! The same thing applies your business. To have a vital, growing business, we need to bring in that most essential human element, love.... When it comes to the elements of business success, most people don’t think about love. When I bring this topic up (cautiously, I might add), I can almost hear the Tina Turner song, “What’s Love Got to Do with It?” playing in the background. But love is essential in business, as it is in our personal lives.

Yeah, I know that love is a “touchy-feely” word, but I’m going to stand my ground here and state that without bringing love into your business, you’re sunk...or at the best, stuck. Stay with me here, as I examine what is needed for a business to go beyond surviving—to thriving.

You, your customers and clients, and your employees, all need the same things—to have one’s needs taken care of, to be heard, to be respected, to feel appreciated, to be treated with integrity, and to know that you are cared about. When you look at these elements, they’re parts of what we call “Love”. Your employees and your clients are the “life blood”

of your business. Just like you, they don’t check who they are as human beings “at the door” when they are in their professional environments. And as human beings, the deepest calling of our hearts is to be loved.

The ugly truth is that, according to research by the Gallup organization and the US Labor Bureau, the main reason that employees leave a job is because they don’t feel appreciated, they don’t feel valued... the same reason that many clients leave businesses... and many people leave relationships.

Where to start? Start with listening, with truly HEARING. I recall a saying--“Being heard is so akin to being loved, that the two are indivisible.” Try this with your children, spouses, friends, employees, and customers. Then take the next step and address their concerns. Then watch what unfolds...and what happens to yourself as you become the type of leader that others want to follow.

So, love your employees, love your clients, serve them by wanting for them what you want for yourself, and you will find that your business AND your life will be enriched.

Seelsorger: "Carer of the Soul" as a Leadership Model

By Klaus-Peter Finke-Härkönen ☺

I was recently asked to lead a German language men's philosophical organization. I contemplated this request to serve as the leader in order to be clear about whether it served me personally, and if it served me, if I could extend that authentic service to the members.

In a recent Higher Ground Leadership® retreat we completed a simple, yet powerful exercise to "reveal" our true personal values, and my top value was revealed to be "Sanctuary". Coincidentally, the German Community Organization I was asked to lead meets in a sanctuary, so I decided to take on this leadership role, spending the next year exploring my relationship to this value of mine called "sanctuary" which, at my deepest level, informs and guides my decisions.

One of the members of the philosophy organization is a police officer who is studying to become a priest. I asked him what his "Pflicht", or Duty, would be as a

priest. His answer in German: "Seelsorger" or "carer of the soul".

Higher Ground Leadership®, for me, has at its core foundation facilitating soul-based communication infused with love, exactly as you would expect in a loving, healthy, vibrant, and flourishing family.

That feeling of soulful communication was most powerfully imprinted in me by my loving and adoring German Grandmother "OMA". That feeling of love and adoration and positive expectancy, was authentic, real, and palpable, and I am eternally grateful for the gift of feeling that divine love emanating powerfully and authentically from my German "Oma".

So, I have chosen to explore Higher Ground Leadership® as a Seelsorger, from the sanctuary of my heart and soul, by listening with loving understanding in my personal, community and business roles.

The Millennial Balance

By Whitney Higdon ☺

As a child, when I thought what I wanted my career to be, one thing always stuck out in my mind: to be happy. It might seem simple enough, but when thinking about the older generation that shaped my view of the work force, it seemed like nobody liked their job, and everyone was working for the weekend, and I knew I wanted to change that.

Over the years I have found exactly where I am when I am at my happiest: seeing small businesses excel when they thought they were at the end of the road. Given that we are also a small business, I find I am just as invested in these companies as I am in our own. Working hands-on with business leaders, we inspire them at the highest level so that this trickles down to each employee. This holistic approach has

led to most of our work coming from client referrals, and this enables us to work with people that care as much about their business as we do about ours.

By finding what drives my happiness, and what fuels my creative fire, I was able to create a career for myself that fuels my passion, because it's not a career to me anymore, it's my life. Inspiring others through showing them what they are capable of, I can give small business owners their happiness and passion back and watch them shine as business leaders. Finding your happiness is the first step to create an integrated life, because with happiness comes passion, and with passion comes inspiration; and when you are inspired you can change the world, one person at a time.



Nature Shows Us the Way, We Just Have to Follow Its Lead

By Tony Martignetti ☺

“If we remain humble and grounded in nature’s wisdom, our mind will guide us safely through the confines of unawareness and the blindness of ignorance.” – Erik Pevernagie

Have you noticed how the concepts of leadership extend to all aspects of life? I love exploring the world and what I have come to realize is that a great travel experience requires what I call “Grounded Leadership.”

There are scheduling complications, language challenges, and cultural customs to navigate. Those who can’t adapt, release expectations or embrace the moment... end up freaking out. But, when you’re a grounded leader, you can accept what comes to you.

Grounded leadership is the power to stay calm and measured in your responses. As a result, you remain centered and react without getting flustered or animated.

Things come in, and you respond. “Ok, I can process this, and even if I don’t have the answers, I can deal calmly with this situation.” So, you breathe it in, and you breathe it out.

What I like about grounded leadership is that this is based on the principles of nature. Nature’s work gets done. It doesn’t have to be managed. It knows when to let go, and it doesn’t try to control anything. As the weather changes, it doesn’t stress; it simply adapts without a thought.

Here are a few qualities of grounded leaders:

- **They are learners, listeners, and optimists.** They don’t have all the answers, but they know they will find a way forward.
- **They see connections and patterns.** They seek belonging, and at the same time, they stay open and see under the surface of the situation. This allows them to recognize the patterns and even know when to break patterns if they need to.
- **They are also regenerative.** Meaning that they can bring things back to life. *Replenish, Reinvigorate. Reinspire.*

And when everyone else sees a situation that looks terrible, these are the leaders who see how it could be the most incredible opportunity ever—turning it into a beautiful work of art!

The Inseparable Nature of Work, Life, and You.

By Eirini Metaxas ☺

We are constantly evolving and becoming, and our core values anchor us.

It is with this thought that I approach the notion of the integration of work and life—“work” and “life” are not separate spheres of our lives to be balanced. Instead, they are both a part of one single, unified sphere.

As a life coach I have learned that aligning our thoughts, feelings and actions with our core values allows us to be the best versions of who we really are. At work, this results in productivity and success. In the rest of our lives (and at work too, because it is the same), it results in happiness and fulfillment.

When we are disturbed at home, that disturbance comes to work with us.

When we are feeling successful and good at work, that comes home with us.

We bring our energy wherever we go.

And so, it is essential to cultivate a mindset to address whatever situation we are in. That mindset is to live as our authentic selves.

How can we honor our intention and core values by choosing against them? We can't.

Our values give us a sense of meaning and connection. They chaperone us through life. Our values shine through when we are being our best self.

Manifesting our authentic selves in all aspects of our lives is an achievable goal.

Having the right attitude allows us to make the right choices and opens us up to the possibilities of shining and making a difference in life, whether at work, at home, or anywhere.

We are the same person with the same emotions, thoughts, and feelings in different environments. Our challenge is to see with a deeper awareness what makes us happy or unhappy in any situation. We have a choice about how we respond to life.

When we are guided by our core values, we are manifesting authenticity. The challenge for all of us is, “How can we tap into our values to create positive environments, at home, at work and across the oneness of our lives?”

12

Finding Beauty and Love in Everything, and Everyone

By Dr. Janet Palmer ☺

The responsibility that awaits all of us is so exciting. Our being alive at this time, means that there are things that this moment in time requires of each of us to contribute. Sitting and reflecting on our potential individual contributions to make the world a better place becomes a necessity. The joy of knowing that when awakened and cultivated, an environment of love is possible, regardless of the circumstances. This is never so evident as when faced with misunderstanding. It is then that the opportunity arises where the choice to end the moment in such a way that each participant walks away feeling heard, valued, and appreciated for being a person and for feeling so impassioned that they could voice their viewpoint with clarity and conviction. The opportunity to cherish humanity gives homage to all the historical deposits made into you. The ability to

look beyond the immediate difference and applaud the day, month, and year in which the difference has occurred, supports the myriad of viewpoints that this moment in time affords. The political, global, historical contributions have been timed as steps on a ladder to be used by you to draw upon for a favorable destination. The power of committing to always finding the beauty and transformative power of each moment is a way of honoring your being an agent of possibility in times like this. To be the voice of calm, affirmation, joy, and love brings a new perspective, disarms the charged moment of misunderstanding, and brings a breath of fresh air to the situation. Getting oneself to the place where this level of emotional preparedness brings calm to chaos requires a consistent practice of self-care.



Living What We Teach

By Dr. Janet Palmer ☺

In a few weeks I will have circled around the sun for 1 year following a health scare. In a recent conversation with friends, I was asked how I was feeling. Having that question posed to me felt like a déjà vu moment. I had been ruminating on this question for a few weeks. I responded that I was gifted with the ability of choice, reflection, and purpose. I equate this moment as reminiscent of a baby who embarks on its first year of life. Several confirmations surfaced over this season of my life: my value system and mindset were the tracks upon which I could walk assuredly, and would serve me well, even during the uncharted environment before me. On reflection, the embrace of my process was testament to my faith in God, the many hours of daily discipline dedicated to devotion. Tears, song, and trust at times were my only certainty. The promise that a recited scripture, which I voiced

initially as a very young girl, held my hand, heart and mind as I walked through those many valleys of the shadow of death. The many strategies I offered my clients over the years in practice, served as both truths and comforts to every facet of my physical and emotional being. A frequent checklist against which I measured myself, and used as a standard, were the CASTLE® principles. The ability to measure myself against each of the benchmarks of those principles during my positive and negative moments in this journey, served both as confirmation and challenge to my becoming. What an exhaling moment to see the horizon more clearly, yes, much more clearly than days before, with the joy and pride that hours spent being coached, learning, praying, writing, and waiting paid off.

Helping the Person Next to Us

By Colin Platt ☺

The importance of humanism skills is the focus of some of Canada's leading Universities and thought leaders in response to a variety of factors, including the on-set of AI, the pace of change and the evolution of 'work'. Some say that computers cannot replace 'human' skills, and we need to be agile in the face of significant change. Others believe humanism skills are the way to engage and inspire the next generation and perhaps save our species.

Love is the strongest emotion, and over thousands of years this has been confirmed—religions urged us to “love thy neighbor” and John Lennon famously said, “all you need is love.” None of this is new, but we are at an inflection point—the world is hurting and ‘love’ in all aspects of our lives may be the antidote.

Nelson Mandela, Mother Teresa, Mahatma Gandhi, and other great human beings demonstrated the value of putting others first and supporting the whole. Simon Sinek says, “if you want to feel happy, do something for yourself. If you want to feel fulfilled, do something for someone else.” The most inspiring leaders have found a better way to influence human dynamics, while our political institutions sow division, stagnation and waste. I am not suggesting we all take up Mandela's mantle, but if we could all

move towards Mandela's direction, what might we accomplish?

For many years we have adopted the carrot and stick approach to management, and while this can get results, it is only for the short term. Human beings will respond to fear and manipulation, but over time trust will break down and loyalty will evaporate. The world runs on the depth and quality of our relationships. Human beings perform their best when oxytocin (the love hormone), is present, so shouldn't we create circumstances for this in all aspects of our lives? The great resignation has been fueled by people taking stock of their lives during Covid and finding themselves uninspired by their workplaces.

As Lance Secretan points out it is impossible to lead two lives—one at home and one at the office. We need to support the next generation in developing humanism skills and encourage them to care, build trust, be inclusive, and positively leverage our differences. This orientation will move the human race forward, and perhaps even save our species. There are a lot of complex issues ahead, and it is going to take all of us pulling together to be successful. Do you have the courage to lead with love?



15

Smarter Working

By Colin Platt ☺

For over 25 years, I've helped to lead small businesses and large corporate enterprises, experiencing a variety of work environments. I agree with Lance's position that we need to be human and ourselves at home and equally so at the office.

For 9 years, I had the privilege of helping to lead Aon's Best Employers Program, in Canada, and through this experience worked with hundreds of organizations across the country, all trying to understand and improve the people dimension of their business. We gathered significant data on workplaces and came to understand the key factors common to successful organizations. Broadly, these included: leadership, relationship with manager, evaluation of performance and communication. And, the tangible aspects, such as compensation had to make sense. Taking this further, the common denominator was relationships, skills of compassion and caring. One of my former colleagues used to say – "we could feel it at the reception desk." The strength of the culture was often evident walking into the building. The best organizations were connecting with their people at a human level and encouraging their people to bring their whole selves to work.

Harvard's 75-year Study on Human Happiness, the longest study ever on happiness, points to the quality of our human relationships as the greatest influence

on people's happiness. And this cannot be just an 'at home' phenomenon. Our lives are increasingly interconnected and positive relationships are fundamental to us as human beings in all aspects of our lives. Trust and knowing those around you have your back is critical. Phil Jackson, former NBA player and coach says, "Love is the force that ignites the spirit and bonds teams together." Love, in the sense of deeply caring for your Team is finding its way into the corporate world. The mental health, anxiety and fear present in many organizations will hopefully be countered by this. Research points to the next generation being attuned to inclusion, diversity, inter-connectivity and to supporting each other.

Lance talks a lot about inspiration and what we can achieve if we are truly inspired. Moving away from a fear-based system to one of infinite possibilities is key and should be our focus—at home and at the office. As Peter Drucker famously said, "Culture eats strategy for breakfast", and humanism skills may well be the best secret to our success! Simon Sinek's book the Infinite Game talks to these qualities and their importance in the longevity of our institutions.

When people are truly inspired and connected with the organization, they are untethered, and amazing things tend to happen. And, when we get this piece right, we no longer need to 'manage' the KPI's.

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Trust... The Common Denominator

By Colin Platt ☺

When we think about the most effective relationships in our lives, the common denominator is TRUST, and trust transcends our personal lives, work lives and romantic relationships. Where we have deep trust with another person there is mutual commitment, vulnerability, a respectful recognition of differences, and, most important to this discussion, congruence, defined by Merriam-Webster as *the quality or state of agreeing, coinciding, or being congruent*. A senior colleague of mine noted that congruence is when your heart, head, mouth and feet are all saying the same thing.

There is an old Proverb that says Trust comes on foot and leaves on horseback. When we look across the dimensions of our lives, the deepest, most satisfying relationships have a deep level of trust. To Lance's argument that we cannot be one individual at home and another at work really hits on this idea of congruence. The most successful people I have encountered in my life have a high-level of congruence, they know who they are, and what they

believe, and they bring their authentic selves to every relationship. These individuals do not lead two lives, they create deeper, more inspiring relationships in every aspect of their lives by being congruent.

H.L. Mencken said, "For it is mutual trust, even more than mutual interest, that holds human association together." The most successful organizations encourage their employees to bring their authentic selves to work, to develop trusting relationships that push ideas and inspire individuals to achieve extraordinary results. By contrast, as we have seen with the great resignation, there are still many corporate environments that are encumbered by conflicting agendas, self-interest, and politics. This can make it difficult for people to be congruent and thereby to develop deep, trusting relationships with their colleagues. These environments tend to suffer from higher levels of stress, burn-out and rarely create the conditions of flow—where we know people do their best work—at home and at work.

The Customer Isn't No. 1

By Scott Regan ☺

In business school, I was always taught that the customer is No. 1, and this idea was reinforced during the formative stages of my career. Everything was about making the customer happier, more satisfied, more eager to buy, more loyal, more anything and everything—even if it was at the expense of the employees.

All of this made sense—until I went to work for a large health system that was struggling to survive. This organization was suffering through annual losses of \$20 million, patient satisfaction scores in the bottom decile nationally, poor employee satisfaction scores, and staff turnover of 37%.

As the chief architect of both the brand strategy and the culture strategy, it didn't take me long to realize that the brand was the culture, and the culture was the brand. If our physicians, nurses, techs, support staff, financial analysts, patient transporters, dietary and housekeeping teams, security guards, and the men and women who cut the grass and planted flowers, weren't inspired, then how could we expect them to provide inspiring patient care and customer service?

The answer: We couldn't.

We pulled our marketing budget and reinvested it

into our people—not billboards—creating offerings, programs, and opportunities for the 5,000 team members who worked us. Our leadership team spent more time walking the hallways, even on weekends and third shifts, than they did in their offices. “Are you able to do the very best work you’re capable of doing?” we asked. “Tell us what’s getting in the way, and we’ll fix it.” “Tell us your aspirations, and we’ll help you achieve them.”

With questions such as these, along with real, tangible responses, our transformation began. Once our team understood that we cared as much, or more, about them than the bottom line, they started caring more about the work they did. They were inspired, and their inspiration showed.

Four years later, we were named the 54th best place to work in the U.S. by Fortune magazine and one of the top 100 hospitals in America by Modern Healthcare. Our bottom line swelled to \$50 million, patient satisfaction was top decile nationally, and employee turnover was less than 10%.

All because we decided to serve our employees first, putting them first—ahead of the patients and, more important, ahead of the monthly financial statements.

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Why Virtual is Virtuous

By Scott Regan ☺

In 2009, I launched a cloud-based strategic planning app. Within two years, the company had a couple dozen employees occupying cubicles in very-expensive office space in the Buckhead area of Atlanta. That's just the way things were back then; remote work was not even up for discussion.

I sold my stake in the company in 2013 and, the following year, launched a digital marketing company. This company would be different, though. No office space, with employees working when they wanted to and from wherever they wanted. We harnessed technology to create a collaborative work environment and hired the best talent we could find—regardless of where they lived. Our team members have hailed from North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Ohio, Colorado, and Missouri. They've worked from lake houses in the remote areas of Alabama, the seashores of Maine, 500-year-old homes in Derby, England, and microbreweries scattered across the U.S.

When COVID-19 hit, we were perfectly positioned to thrive, and thrive we did, growing 60% in 18 months. Now that we're on the other side of the pandemic, data is pouring in that confirms what we

already knew.

- Remote workers are 22% happier than workers in onsite environments, plus have less stress, more focus, greater productivity, and better physical and mental well-being, according to an Owl Labs study.
- 88% of respondents to an Ergotron study agreed that the flexibility to work from home has increased their job satisfaction.
- A Stanford study found that working from home increases productivity by 13%, while a ConnectSolutions study pegged the productivity improvement at 77%.

If employees are happier, healthier, and more productive working from home, then why are so many companies now forcing their remote workers back to the office? Letting people work from wherever they want not only embodies the virtues of honesty, courage, compassion, generosity, integrity, fairness, and self-control, but also exemplifies Higher Ground Leadership®.

We had it all wrong before the pandemic. This time, will we get it right?

Integrated Wholeness and Generativity

By Bill Richardson ☺

The *Spirit@Work® Cards* defines integration as “effortless confluence and merging of all of the activities in our lives.” and defines wholeness as “body, mind, and emotions are integrated with my spirit.”¹ Generativity, a “universal need to nurture and guide both younger and older generations,” can be a catalyst for the conversations we need to have about the perils of trading wholeness for approval. Aging and its impermanence are the common denominators we share in this human odyssey. The realization of this shared experience can open channels of communication among generations. This can lead to integration and wholeness that promote oneness across our lives—including our work lives.

A generational cohort is a group of people who go through similar life-defining experiences. Six generational cohorts are alive today: Generation Z, Millennial, Generation X, Baby Boomer, Silent Generation, and The Greatest Generation.

Generational Intelligence (GQ) is your ability to connect with, learn from, and help our age-diverse population show up more integrated, whole, and balanced. A high GQ enables us to appreciate each generation’s contributions while respecting different

perspectives and behaviors. This is an example of Higher Ground Leadership® modeling wholeness and integration at a deep, and fundamentally human level.

This generational angle came to life for me when I examined each cohort’s perspectives and behaviors through the lens of the CASTLE® Principles. I was also intrigued by how integrated and whole each cohort remains in their values and priorities even as they move through their life stages. Shared experiences, or even a common enemy, forge a stronger sense of wholeness and integration.

Perhaps we all can learn from this and many other pearls of generational wisdom waiting to be revealed as we experience this odyssey called life.

“If we can cultivate a concern for others, keeping in mind the oneness of humanity, we can build a more compassionate world.” – Dalai Lama

¹Lance H. K. Secretan and Marie Knapp, *Spirit@Work® Cards: Bringing Spirit and Values to Work* (Caledon, Ontario, CA: The Secretan Center Inc., 2002).

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The Ghosts of Job Hiring

By Jim Rink ☺

Since 1843, Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* has inspired countless generations with Ebenezer Scrooge and his encounter with three ghosts on Christmas Eve. Today we talk about being “ghosted” in a different way – by job applicants in the hiring process. Perhaps, our encounter with the three ghosts of job hiring may inspire a Scrooge-like transformation for us.

We need to look at our ghosts in a slightly different order. According to a 2021 study by Indeed.com¹, the internet job platform, 48% of job seekers said they stopped communicating with prospective employer during the selection process; 46% did not show up for a scheduled interview; and another 7% did not show up for their scheduled first day. **This is the ghost of job hiring present.**

Mark Feffer from Reworked.co² (and many others) views the current situation as “payback,” with candidates reflecting the previous behaviors they have experienced by hiring companies. The Indeed study found 77% of job seekers said they have been ghosted by a prospective employer. Only 27 percent

of employers said they had not ghosted a job seeker in the past year. **This is the ghost of job hiring past.**

Inspiration and hope lie in breaking the cycle by embracing the CASTLE® Principles. As applicants and employers, we must have the **Courage** to respect each other; the **Authenticity** to embrace each other as fellow humans; **Service** to view the hiring process as an opportunity to invest in one another as potential community members; **Truthfulness** to communicate our questions, thoughts, and concerns; **Love** to recognize the innate value and worth of all people in the process; and a desire for **Effectiveness** through welcoming good people into great organizations in an inspiring and loving manner. **This is the ghost of job hiring yet to be.**

¹ Threlkeld, K. (2021, February 11) Employer ghosting: A troubling workplace trend. Indeed. <https://www.indeed.com/lead/impact-of-covid-19-on-job-seeker-employer-ghosting>

² Feffer, M. (2021, December 23) Candidates turn the tables to ghost employers. Reworked. <https://www.reworked.co/talent-management/candidates-turn-the-tables-to-ghost-employers>



The Seamlessness of Personal and Work Life

By Leonard Rotham ☺

When our personal and work lives become seamless, we're in the zone—"two lives" are one. The preparation steps and the "peak" performance in athletes is an example. The athlete's personal-life-preparation in advance of their work (their competition) merge. The seemingly two distinct ways of being become one.

Nathan Chen, the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics gold medal winner for men's figure skating is an example.¹ Chen did two things to change his mindset that won him the gold.

First, he **connected** with the people surrounding him that could make a difference, his parents, teammates, coaches, choreographers and trainers.

Second, in Beijing, when looking out the window of a bus, he realized how some people were going about their day as he was heading into the biggest event of his life. At that moment, Chen said he shifted his focus from targeting the top of the podium to being **grateful** for the opportunity to compete at the biggest sports event.

"It's about coming in with gratitude, with respect for what you do, respect for what all the other athletes do," he said.

Chen also shared that he went to the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics without his cellphone. Chen thought that not bringing his cellphone would help him **escape the cognitive drain** brought by "the urge to scroll for hours through social media."

Instead, Chen decided to bring his electric guitar to the Olympic Games to "**tap into the rhythm** of music," a key element in figure skating, to help him **clear his mind**.

Nathan Chen did not change the way he lives personally because he is an Olympian. As a figure skating Olympian, Nathan Chen approached his work in the ways needed to perform at his best. Nathan Chen created a seamless personal and work life to flourish.

¹<https://nextshark.com/nathan-chen-secrets-to-success/>

Balancing on the Tight Rope!

By Charlotte Seefeldt ☺

Are you the woman, wife, mother, and professional who thinks she has to conquer all? Have you already gone through the divorce and are now a solo parent with a part time co-parenting critic? Were you brought up thinking and reading in magazines that “I must do all, and be all, I am ‘superwoman’?”

Have you been balancing on a tight rope in your high heels, brief case in hand, roll-on luggage, kid’s backpacks, and a glass of spilling wine in hand? We have been misled into believing that we are imperfect if we cannot do everything. The truth is, balance is an illusion, and you are not failing miserably in your role as superwoman.

When you focus on finding harmony you will restore joy in your life. First, define your “big why” in the world. How do you want to make a difference? What

is the legacy you want to leave behind and who do you want to become? Build a supportive community of your “FRAMily”—friends that become family—mentors, coaches, and cheerleaders. After all, we are pack animals, and we survive better with others who pick us up and celebrate when we are shining bright. Self-care, grace, respect, pivot, gratitude, love, and creating systems to support your family are how we find harmony in a world that can sometimes feel overwhelming. Teach children responsibility, self-respect, and survival techniques to navigate their future and support the family unit today. Go create or find a job that aligns with who you desire to become.

Let your superpower be creating harmony and joy in your world. Learn to flow in all aspects of you—the mother, wife, executive, creative or beautiful goddess that you want to embrace.

Celebrating Uniqueness

By Charlotte Seefeldt ☺

How often have you seen people treat others who are diverse from them in a different manner? If someone is “different”, we may show bias, but in reality, we are all unique. Do you treat people at work differently from those in your personal life? For example, at work you endure performance reviews that you would never inflict on your family. Doing so would justifiably cause an uproar. But an inspiring conversation about how someone’s efforts are supporting your (and their) higher purpose would be an elegant contrast.

Subconsciously we have accepted norms that set boundaries and expectations for people that are often uncomfortable and unattainable. A “boss” might be conflicted about whether they were their friend or a subordinate. Becoming aware of and striving to treat

everyone with kindness, respect, and love—across all domains of our lives—will change the world.

Consider treating people uniquely not because of the segment of your life in which they appear but because of their uniqueness. Everyone is different in the way we learn, the way we teach, the way we lead, and, most of all, the way we think. Regardless of whether a person is left or right brained, neurodivergent, or introverted/extroverted, we can all learn, listen for cues on processing types, and meet people where they are. This allows them to receive and share their best selves with you. Learning the best possible way to connect with your family and work mates—indeed, all people—will result in less overwhelm and struggle, and more joy for you. Doing so will help you create much joy and kindness in the world.

The Path to Inspiration Is Our Values

By Karen Senteio ☺

The pandemic has been a tumultuous Pandora's Box unleashing the difficult, the hidden, the curious, the challenging, the good, bad, and the ugly. Yes, it has been all that, but it has also been a time of clarity, courage, love, connection, and inspiration. We live and lead navigating a duality map where our values are the compass, our North Star. Our values are the light that creates the path forward, inspiring us to get up, reset or change course when that is the best solution. Rethink, as Adam Grant would say.

My fabulous friend, Kent Schwendy, is an extreme hiker. He courageously hikes alone in places I would dare not go enduring incredible weather extremes. Over coffee, we talked about his adventures, and I asked if he was ever in a life-threatening situation and lost in the woods. He said yes. I asked him how he found his way out. He said, "I stop, retrace my

steps until I find something familiar. Once I find that, I begin again." Our values are like that. We can call on them to help us navigate our life maps and re-inspire us when we have lost our way.

We are in times where ambiguity and opportunity are part of the package and duality is a constant, but our values are our inspirational companions providing light, wisdom, and authenticity. In life and leadership, our values are there, whether spoken or unspoken. They shine the light on paths not yet taken and illuminate those taken that may need a reset, a new strategy, or even an apology. They help us face the duality of life where opposites coexist and enrichen the experience. Stop, retrace, and reconnect. What you will find will be inspiring and familiar, and your path forward.



Work is an Activity, not a Place

By David Sherrod ☺

In the Industrial Age we solidified that Work was a place. We would “go to work” and “clock in at work.” Aside from many service industries, work took place at locations.

With the advent of technology, the need to be in a certain place diminished. But we all still showed up.

In 2005 I worked in a bank’s home office with a team of Project Managers. We supported projects with participants from all over the world. Our meetings were all handled as group conference calls. When Cisco came out with the SoftPhone we were literally able to be anywhere with an internet connection and participate, 100%, in our work. Only one employee did so (she said it changed her life). The rest of us continued to drag ourselves into an overcrowded office through burdensome traffic every day. Just like most office workers. Until 2020.

When you look at work as an activity rather than

a place, it can be performed wherever you’re comfortable and able to participate 100%. You needn’t hear that annoying voice behind you (“Corporate accounts payable, Nina speaking. Just a moment.”). The temperature can be just right; your 2- or 4-legged children can be nearby.

When work is an activity you can balance it with other activities of importance, relating to your health, spirit, personal relationships.

This is true even if you must go to a specific place to perform your work. This shift in mental perspective about work—that work is an activity, just like exercise, meditating, praying, yoga, bowling, or spending time with my family—is life-changing and should be engaged with accordingly.

This is the secret to creating an integrated life. “Work is an activity, not a place.”

Work is for Joy

By David Sherrod ☺

This framework from Thomas Leonard (the father of modern coaching, 1955-2003) was provocative when he shared it. Even as recently as the first half of 2020, when I called on many managers to discuss this idea with them, I was met with “Joy? No.” Frequently.

After two years of the pandemic, though, many have altered their minds. We see this as people have shuffled from one place to another, trying to find more meaningful roles. And I heard it in a recent “Deep Dive” into this topic with several managers.

Together we decided that Joy was different from Happiness or Pleasure. We could be happy with a work outcome or event. Pleasure seemed an even more foreign concept than Joy in the context of work.

We discussed if Joy was another way of saying Satisfaction. At the least, Satisfaction is a

steppingstone from the mundane completion of tasks for a paycheck to the Joyful pursuit of our vocation.

There’s a saying – Make your passion your job and you’ll never work a day in your life. But the idea that Work is for Joy isn’t that either. No matter how passionate you are about the work you perform, there will be tasks you’d rather avoid, and would delegate to others if you could. But if you found their completion also brought you Joy, you’d have the experience Thomas Leonard was describing.

In Higher Ground Leadership® one of the CASTLE® Principles is “Service.” In the discussions I’ve been having, everyone has agreed they find Joy in Service. Perhaps that’s the connection – to understand how your work Serves Others, to find Joy in that Service – to see that Work is for Joy.

Encouraging Dialogue Through Daily Check-ins

By Rod Stilwell ☺

In his book, *The Bellwether Effect*, Dr. Lance Secretan makes a powerful argument for daily check-ins as a remedy for the uninspiring performance review. Using the Values-centered Leadership® model he provides examples of Mastery, Chemistry and Delivery to coach colleagues through Learning, Empathizing and Listening. As I read these examples, I reflected on the hundreds of conversations I have had with clients over my 30 years in consulting and realized that for many of these, getting the conversation started was the greatest roadblock.

Recently, in working with the CEO of a large, international retailer, I asked him what his dream was for his business. The response began with words like trust and relationship-building but didn't really inspire me. Then, some 20 minutes into his response, he said something that lit a fire within me! He dreamed that every employee would positively impact somebody every day. Imagine thousands of employees having a recognizable, positive impact on someone they met, every single day. Imagine a young (or old) stock person coming home and her mom asking, "So, honey, tell me about a positive impact you had on someone today."

As I pondered that dream and a world where we all had a discernable, positive impact on everyone

around us, I began to create the Mastery, Chemistry and Delivery conversations in my head. How could greater Mastery make the interaction even more impactful? How could the positive impact improve the Chemistry between the individuals? What would Delivery need to look like to be positively impactful—every day?

Over the past 25 years I have watched a steady improvement in industrial safety, in large part because we made it part of everything we did. I discovered that safety improved when workers took the messages home and were safe wherever they were, not just at work. I listened this week to my nephew's 3-year-old son picking up his mom's exercise weights and putting them away while muttering, "Safety first," as he placed them on the shelf. His dad is a civil engineer and had obviously brought the message home. That inspired me to suggest tools and practical exercises that would help my client cascade his dream of every employee masterfully delivering positive impact every day and bringing that message home.

Using the dream to initiate the daily check-in conversation gives permission to employees to thrive and be impactful, and using the Values-centered Leadership® model provides the tools for them to live the dream.



Curiosity Enhances Work and Life

By Claudette Ward ☺

It seems so natural to separate work from our daily lives, yet does that make us the best of who we are? If we give it a try, we'll realize that engaging in curiosity with our employees can blend the two, enhancing our lives and work as well.

Have the courage to step out of your comfort zone with curiosity. When you do, you'll enhance your knowledge of others and they of you. The more you learn the more you'll realize that your personal life and your work life are simply merged to create your one life. A leader's ability to be curious enough to seek more insight into their employee's life, not only expands the leader's knowledge of that employee, it also inspires that employee to realize their leader truly cares.

Curiosity becomes a two-way street. By approaching communication through candid and courageous conversations the leader gains important insights into

the layered dimensions that impact the performance of their employee. At the same time, the employee discovers the uniqueness of their leader and the realization that they each bring to their workplace significant realities of life, which, collectively enriches the work they do, and the environment they co-create.

When you think about it, the reality is, it's very difficult to separate work from life. To deny the impact of your environment, socialization, education and background or the relationships you have developed have no impact on the way you approach work, is folly. Each individual carries with them their unique behaviors and beliefs, based on their life's experiences. Therefore, when one is curious enough to respectfully seek more insights from another, a more trusting and inspiring environment is achieved that whether at home or work, the reality is—it's all just one life.

Happiness: An Effective Way of Being Inspiring

By Arnie Wohlgemut ☺

Every parent wants their children to be happy. Their desire for happiness and well-being was in place before they were born.

My friend has two boys under the age of six. He expressed concern to me about the negative influence some neighborhood children have on his sons. Like my parent's, he is concerned about the happiness and well-being of his sons in the early stages of their life journey.

As with many things, we learn from those around us. Finding a way to be thankful and happy in many of life's situations is not usually one of them. As Arthur C. Brooks wrote in an article for The Atlantic, "Remember that finding and spreading cheer in an imperfect world will make life better for you and make your efforts at progress that much more effective."

When I look back on my life, my experience is that happiness is a choice, not a destination. If it were

a destination, we would never be happy. Rather, happiness is the means to an end—it is a path on life's journey that only we can choose!

Happiness, like effectiveness, is not easily confined, or limited, to work or life. Burying your happiness under complaints and outrage because the world disappoints you, will not make work or life any better, but more likely the opposite.

I can say "I just want to be happy" to myself as often as I like, but without some context, the sentiment is meaningless.

American philosopher and poet Ralph Waldo Emerson was right when he said, "The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well."

Will you join me today by spreading some cheer in our imperfect world?

Power and Conformity = the Absence of Inspiration

By Arnie Wohlgenut ☺

Some of our human basic needs as outlined by Abraham Maslow are love and a sense of connection. Even in our affluent and social media interconnectedness, these needs never go away. Love and a sense of connection can influence our behavior in our work and our relationships with others. It clearly has influenced how we operate in the business setting.

Ever since the industrial revolution, we have continued to expand our list of what purports to be the “ideal employee”, and “ideal manager”. This has often been in direct contrast to our basic need for love and belonging as it relates to friendship, intimacy, family, and love. If the Covid pandemic has taught us anything, it is that these ideals have not served us well.

I have observed that these basic needs—to be loved and feel a sense of connection— can elicit reactions and behaviors that are not part of our everyday self.

The first behavior is the demonstration of dominance and power. A posture of power cannot command love

and because it very often results in manipulation. Although this behavior can accomplish many things, it cannot command love and a sense of connection.

The second behavior is the demand that we conform to situations or work cultures. As Wayne Dyer wrote, “When you’re just like everybody else, you’ve nothing to offer other than your conformity.”

Conformity may be a stress avoidance tactic. It could also be a self-promotion tactic, believing that conforming behavior benefits us. Many have conformed to the workplace or business culture in hopes of “riding the escalator to the top”.

Power and conformity are not inspiring. They are not a sign of courage, neither are they a demonstration of being authentic. Power and conformity are self-serving. Those using these behaviors love only themselves.

Beware the pitfalls of these behaviors and learn to fill the need for love and belonging in a wholesome and authentic way.

Contributors

All the contributors to this collection of 28 essays are Pathfinders, the name we give to certified members of The Higher Ground Community. They are diverse, global, and talented. Their biographies are below. If you would like to connect with any of them, please send an email to info@secretan.com indicating which contributor you would like to contact.

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Lynnette Embree has been a life and business coach for over 20 years. She is certified through Success Unlimited Network® and CoachVille and carries the Associate Certified Coach (ACC) designation from the International Coaching Federation (ICF). Lynnette holds an MBA from Shenandoah University and has taught at Lord Fairfax Community College as an adjunct instructor for fifteen years. Lynnette is the President-Elect of the Kiwanis Club of Winchester, VA, and will be President during the 100th Anniversary of the Club. ≡

David Fisher is a Higher Ground Leadership® Pathfinder, Certified Positive Intelligence Coach (CPQC) and value-based sales professional, David travels extensively, supporting, training, facilitating, helping, coaching, caring and enjoying his direct work with interesting people. ≡

Lynnea Hagen, MS is an author, speaker, teacher and host of Abundance Leadership live-talk radio,





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Tony Martignetti is a trusted advisor, coach, experience creator, author, podcast host, and speaker. He brings together over 25 years of business and management experience, formal training, and extreme curiosity to elevate leaders and equip them with the tools to navigate through change and unlock their true potential. Tony is the host of The Virtual Campfire podcast and the author of “Climbing the Right Mountain: Navigating the journey to An Inspired Life.” ≡

Eirini Metaxas is a metamorphosis coach and founder of Me2morph.com. She has a gentle playful

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Dr. Janet Palmer is an impassioned coach who is dedicated to the success of those she serves. Janet’s clients live their created purpose, serve others and become multifaceted leaders. Gratification comes readily as those who work with Janet love and are at peace with themselves as they experience victory over obstacles that once kept them bound. ≡

Colin Platt resides in Mississauga, Ontario, with his wife Amanda and their four young children. Beyond his passion for family and supporting youth, Colin is a business executive with over 25 years experience. With a focus on leadership, Colin most enjoys enabling culture, collaboration and inspiring his colleagues. ≡

Scott Regan has enjoyed a career of over 30 years working with more than 250 organizations on issues related to strategy, execution management, operational excellence, cultural transformation, and branding. Scott’s insights stem from a rich consulting and management career that includes C-suite experience in healthcare, quality management, and software technology. He has been the COO of a major teaching hospital, executive vice president and healthcare practice lead of a global consulting firm, founder and CEO of a cloud-based strategic planning software company, COO of a plastic surgery physician group, and founder and managing partner of a digital marketing company. ≡

Bill Richardson is a Higher Ground Leadership® Pathfinder dedicated to helping people over the



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age of 50 transition to their last third of their lives with a sense of peace, wisdom, and fulfillment. Bill fosters generativity, as a special way all of us can stay relevant, integrated, and whole throughout our life journey. ≡

Jim Rink is from Naperville, Illinois and his calling is to serve and lead using his gifts of learning and connecting. Jim balances his professional time between his consulting, business development, and coaching work and his community activities in education, workforce development, and the environment. With a diverse career in manufacturing and advanced technology blended with a natural curiosity, he finds great joy in bringing people together through dialogue and discussion. ≡

Leonard Rothman, owner of Leadership @ Work, focuses his executive coaching work with senior corporate and military leaders, in addition to coaching and implementing enterprise-wide Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives. He is PCC certified with a bachelor of electrical engineering degree from Georgia Tech, an M.A. in organizational development from West Georgia College, and an MBA from The Wharton Graduate School. He believes that when leaders flourish, their lives and the people around them change for the better. ≡

Charlotte Seefeldt is a HALO Coach (Home and Life Organizer). Her Why-Be=Do® is “To help women and teens find their voice and create a life that feels less in pieces & more at PEACE!” Charlotte is a PCC Coach, Professional Organizer and Neuro Divergent Coach. She holds a BA in Psychology & believes in unlocking the unconscious blocks with hypnotherapy. Her passion is helping neuro divergent teens see their superpowers, find their voice, and connect with their parents to learn to flow together as

a team and thrive in life. ≡

Karen Senteio is an Executive Coach who partners with leaders ready to UNAPOLOGETICALLY harness their greatest power for the greatest good, activating their internal compass to embody INSPIRATION and COURAGE as a daily practice. ≡

David Sherrod is a modern-day Alchemist. He helps people transform their lives, to make *growth-oriented life development* (GOLD) by finding their own personal elixir of life. His focus is on individuals bringing their unique skills into all their endeavors. He supports individuals and organizations in attaining alignment between their purpose and their actions through experiments, environmental design, and coaching. ≡

Rod Stilwell is an Organizational Health consultant who has been working with management teams of global companies and mega Industrial projects for 30 years. He is new to the Higher Ground Community and passionate about helping clients love their employees and change the world. ≡

Claudette Ward is a passionate leadership coach dedicated and committed to service. She works with senior executives and emerging leaders. The benefit her clients receive is increased confidence and capability to inspire others while serving with courage and authenticity. ≡

Arnie Wohlgemut is a business owner, coach, entrepreneur and community volunteer with the dream of creating a more respectful and kinder world. He is committed to walking alongside individual leaders and/or teams of leaders; coaching and mentoring them on the path towards becoming inspiring leaders. ≡