A Soul's Construction of Culture: Leadership Defined

Dr. Gregory R. Howes, MBA, DM, PMP
The BlameBuster[TM]

Table of Contents

The soul, daimon, genius, fate, character, angel or acorn is the image of the essence of life that is formed in heaven and acts as your angel that calls you toward your destiny, and because it is only an image, it must be grown through ones individual behavior (Hillman, 1996). Gregg Levoy (1997) states that callings are an unknown force announcing the need to change and suggests that one may or may not choose to follow and call; instead, "you just need to figure out what decisions will assure when your life flashes before your eyes, it holds your interest" (p. 196). However, in reality, *when your life flashes before your eyes you need to fall in love with the soul you have grown.*

Nietzsche once stated, "he who has a why to live for can bear almost any how" (Frankl, 1984). This suggests that excellent leaders realize the leadership is created by loving souls facilitating the construction of a social reality that enables individuals to find meaning in their work, and develop fellowship between each other in support of mutual goals.

<div align="center">Discussion</div>

Culture

Leadership is the creation and management of culture (Schein, 1992). Intra-personal and inter-personal communications construct and define organizational culture, and by understanding these communications, leaders can take the necessary actions to create highly functional organizations. Leaders that understand the communication that takes place within an organization can also understand the organization's culture, and can influence its change. To understand the communications within an organization, leaders must understand the many faces of information exchange. "Leadership and culture are two sides of the same coin" (Schein,

1992), and leaders must extract information concerning these faces of communication in order to understand the organization's culture and influence its change.

Social realities are constructed by the collective and independent willpower of all involved, and culture is a social reality. Culture is not something that is imposed upon an organization, but instead it develops through the course of social interaction (Morgan, 1998). Personal reflections and interactions with others through language modify and solidify individual thoughts and behaviors; thus, creating an organizational culture. Language is not a mere transmission of information, but instead, it is a form of social action (Winograd & Flores, 1986); thus, it is through the use of language that the essence of culture is constructed.

The organization's formal and informal communications and its networks develop the basic assumptions used by individuals of the organization. These assumptions develop through the networks of communications; thus, it is important not only to understand them, but also to understand the faces presented in these communication networks. Organizations have competing values systems that create a mosaic of cultural realities instead of a uniform corporate culture (Morgan, 1998). Organizations become what they think and say (Morgan, 1998), and the communication networks used and the faces presented construct the organization's culture.

To understand an organization's communications, a leader must understand its many faces. "The first step in managerial wisdom and artistry is to understand the situation you face" (Bolman & Deal, 1997). This requires understanding the communication networks, and the different individual beliefs as modified based on the specific situation. "Limit your seeing and your thinking and you limit your range of action. Limit your range of action and you limit your effectiveness" (Morgan, 1998).

Individuals espouse different beliefs depending on whether they are communicating with

their journal, individual peer, group peer, subordinate, or management face. If a leader is to understand the organization's culture and influence its change, he or she must understand the communication exchanges of each of these several faces. To understand culture, leaders must understand the different communication exchanges of organizational members when they are self-reflecting, talking to a confidant, interacting in a small group setting, or conversing with ones subordinate or supervisor.

Language does not reflect an organization's culture: It constructs it. Leaders understand organizational culture by understanding the many communication faces and their language transaction networks. It is by understanding the organization's grapevines that a leader can ultimately understand and influence the culture that is being constructed. This construction through language should begin with a leader who has knowledge in organizational and leadership theory. It is through knowledge of these metaphors that appropriate and dexterous language is used in constructing a highly effective social reality.

Epistemology

All knowledge, whether a priori or a posteriori, must be acted upon by the human brain for it to become knowledge. Humans are in control of what goes on in their heads (Hotz, 1996). Humans control what they think; however, these thoughts have no relevance if they are not useful in the reality in which humans live. Clarence Irving Lewis stated that knowledge has three components, "the given", "the concept", and "the interpretation" (Moser & Vander Nat, 1995). "The concept" is a priori knowledge, or knowledge which is accessible only by reason. This is the knowledge of the rationalists. "The given" is a posteriori knowledge, or knowledge which is only accessible through the senses. This is the knowledge of the empiricists. "The

interpretation" is mind made truth (Moser & Vander Nat, 1995). This is the knowledge of the pragmatists.

Platonic rationalist suggested that everything that humans know, they know before birth and that they should try to discover through recollection what they already know but do not remember (Moser & Vander Nat, 1995). Human's gain knowledge through reflection, sensory input, or a combination of both. However, these must be interpreted before a human knows. Mr. Lewis puts it this way, "Without interpretation we should remain forever in the buzzing, blooming confusion of the infant" (Moser & Vander Nat, 1995, p. 240).

Concept empiricists contend that all human knowledge is obtained either directly or indirectly through sensory input (Moser & Vander Nat, 1995). This theory of epistemology states humans are created without knowledge and that they gain all knowledge through their sensory perceptions. However, recent biological evidence indicates that humans are born with knowledge. When humans are born, they already know trigonometry, know how to distinguish figure from ground, and know when one object hits another that the other object will move (Gazzaniga, 1998).

The human brain creates its own perceived reality (Gazzaniga, 1998). This brain makes humans unique and gives them the ability to create knowledge; this brain may be where the soul resides. Christoff Koch, a theoretical neurobiologist at Caltech puts it this way, "There is something very mysterious about consciousness. Why can objective physical systems have subjective states? It is baffling. It gets at the central idea of the soul." (Hotz, 1996, p.9). Humans have souls that contain and process knowledge. If humans ever wanted obvious proof that souls exist, they need but to fall in love once (Hillman, 1996).

In an organizational setting, perceptions are more real than reality, and it is the interpretation of "the given" that creates pragmatic knowledge. To the pragmatist, knowledge is created when concepts are imposed upon "the given" by interpretation (Moser & Vander Nat, 1995). In other words, knowledge is constructed when the soul creates a model in which both concepts and perceptions support each other.

This pragmatic view of knowledge is true for leadership, management, and the creation of knowledge within an organization. Many models and theories exist, which espouse means for implementing knowledge creating concepts, but their usefulness is dependent upon their ability to be applied in a pragmatic world. Leaders facilitate employees' implementation of knowledge in a pragmatic world by constructing opportunities that allow employees to have meaning in the performance of their duties. One of the ways that human beings arrive at meaning in life is by creating works or doing deeds (Frankl, 1984). Leaders catalyze the construction of culture and social realities by constructing and environment that permits others to find meaning in their work.

Construction Meaning

Cognitive scientists are divided into the two camps of objectivists and constructivists (Anderson, 1992). This divide affects all aspects of the being of human beings, and it expresses itself in almost every discipline by opposition between objectivism versus relativism, rationality versus irrationality, objectivity versus subjectivity (Anderson, 1992), and modernism versus postmodernism.

In order to have happiness in life, human beings must believe that their lives have meaning; they must believe that their existence is purposeful. Leaders of organizations must provide employees guidance, but more importantly, leaders must allow employees the freedom to find

meanings in deeds assigned. However, responsibility accompanies freedom. "Freedom is only part of the story and half of the truth. Freedom is but the negative aspect of the whole phenomenon whose positive aspect is responsibleness" (Frankl, 1984, p. 155).

Postmodernism is an enlightenment of the requirement to replace the tolerance of others and other societies in place of the desire to eliminate them, and of the responsibility to harvest without destroying nature's resources instead of the need to conquer them. Above all, postmodernism is the revelation that all individuals collectively determine the universe's social reality; thus, all individuals require and deserve respect. The most important postmodern discovery is that reality is shaped by human perceptions, and cannot be understood as an objective view of nature (Lasch, 1992).

When communicating models of reality, human beings are both attempting to describe an objective "truth", and to construct a future desire; however, they cannot accomplish either of these perfectly because of prejudices. Although human beings can approach an objective understanding of reality, they cannot achieve total and absolute understanding of themselves or the universe in which they exist because they are saddled with their past, present, and future. "Daesin 'is' its past in the manner of its Being which, roughly expressed, actually 'occurs' out of its future" (Heidegger & Krell, 1993, p. 63). Human beings cannot see reality directly; therefore, they create models or symbols to help them in interpreting it. A leading illusion of the rationalistic tradition is the belief that knowledge consists of theories that can be systematically used to make predictions (Winograd & Flores, 1986).

Models and their meanings are communicated using language; however, their meanings are situational. Their meanings -- their realities -- are dependent of the interpretation of the speaker and the listener in a particular situation with a particular history (Winograd & Flores, 1986).

Leaders must accept the postmodern reality that the construction of the future requires the construction of reality, and this construction is accomplished with the use of language.

Core values must be communicated within the organization. "Values, in the true sense, are basic, fundamental, enduring, absolute, and irrevocable" (Giblin, 1997, p. 3). The setting of standards of conduct is the creation of language that will used to create the future and the vision of what the company or organization will become. If core values are neglected, it will never be possible to achieve business excellence (Dahlgaard, 1998).

Leaders cannot just transmit information of what the culture of an organization shall become, but must instead, through active and action oriented language processes, facilitate the creation of a culture that represents the collectively constructed reality that is developed by the independent will of all involved. Leaders of organizations must facilitate and lead the construction of these values, and metaphors of organization and leadership theory assist in this construction. It is through the use of metaphors that individuals develop knowledge that enables them to construct environments that facilitate individuals in finding meaning in their work.

Organizational Theory

George Bernard Shaw said, "This is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one" (Handy, 1996). This metaphor suggests that an organization is a natural phenomenon, and that self-organization will develop under caring mentorship. Additionally, it promotes the belief that humans have self-aware souls that are searching for meaning; thus, leaders of organizations must ensure opportunities exist that permit workers to find meaning in life and to grow their souls.

In the new postmodern organization, recognition should be given to the essential role of reflection and inquiry in all aspects of ones job and to the critical need for this type of learning

immediately following any mistake (or success) (Bergquist, 1993). Knowledge is the foundation

of the contemporary economy (Bergquist, 1993), and in the postmodern organization, a new class

of worker is emerging: a worker that relies on their skills and knowledge for security instead of on

the promise of any single organization. These knowledge workers can take their expertise

elsewhere, and the corporate lawyers have not found an effective way of preventing it (Bergquist,

1993). In postmodern organizations, leaders should gain pleasure from the successes of workers

and their personal growth, and if the worker leaves the organization to pursue greater challenges,

these leaders should take pride in the fact that the worker has grown and is prepared to move on.

"Federalism will become fashionable once again" (Handy, 1996). This resurgent

perspective will begin by recognizing the existence of knowledge workers who have souls to

grow. In the postmodern era, companies everywhere are restructuring, and in doing so, they are

on the path to federalism as the way to manage their complex organizations (Handy, 1996). In

the new era, leadership will take place at the individual level. Individual souls will become

organizational subsidiaries with personal desires, management recognition, and organizational

resources that facilitate their construction of meaning.

New era organizations in all sectors will consist of cultures that promote personal authority

and responsibility. The strength of the federalist organization lies in spreading responsibility

across many decision points (Handy, 1996), and in the postmodern society, it will begin with the

knowledge worker. "Power belongs to the lowest point in the organization" (Handy, 1996, p.

41), and in progressive organizations, these souls will be used to enforce the culture of personal

responsibility.

Chaos and self-organization theory suggests that coherent order always emerges out of

randomness and chaos (Morgan, 1998). This order emerges because the micro-rules (basic rules)

are implemented, and because the mission (the attractor) is understood and accepted by everyone within the organization. When hiring workers in the postmodern era, managers must give a significant preference to workers who are willing to accept responsibility for their actions. This will require hiring workers that fit the organization (Hesselbein, Goldsmith, Beckhard, & Peter F. Drucker Foundation for Nonprofit Management., 1997), and are willing and expected to become part of the organizational family. The new era manager must earn the respect of the employee by demonstrating commitment and service to their growth.

Decentralized organizations will have souls as their smallest subsidiaries, and these workers will desire to exercise their decision making power like all subsidiaries demand, and will look for opportunities that permit them to grow and fulfill their calling. The managers of tomorrow will lead the construction of a new social reality that is based on trust, freedom, and responsibility. These managers will become leaders that use love as the keystone in constructing mutual commitment to the organization and to each other.

Leadership Theory

 "In the new paradigm of leadership, followers and leaders do leadership" (Wren, 1995). The notion of leaders and followers must be disband. This ideology is based on years of cultural themes of kings and servants, superiors and subordinates, and managers and workers. Because of these biases, it is natural to want to define leadership in the terms of leaders and followers. However, this model is not accurate for defining the leadership of today; therefore, a new premise must be adopted.

This new perspective must recognize that leadership is not directives, but is instead a mutual activity. This new model must not identify leadership as a superior directing a subordinate; instead, it must represent leadership as a social interaction between equals. In modern societies

of the West, no one has the right to impose his or her will upon another (O'Toole, 1996). In modern Western societies, individuals are considered equal. Thus, this new paradigm of leadership must leave behind the superior versus subordinate model, and instead construct the leadership as fellowship reality.

Leadership has been defined in many ways, and no definition of leadership could be considered complete and absolute. A single complete definition of leadership does not exist (Wren, 1995). Nevertheless, they all do have common themes to include goals, methods, and direction and control. Some of the definitions that leadership scholars have presented that contain these common themes are 1) the creative and directive force of morale (Munson, 1921), 2) the process by which an agent induces a subordinate to behave in a desired manner (Bennis, 1959), 3) directing and coordinating the work of group members (Fiedler, 1957), 4) transforming followers, creating visions of the goals that may be attained, and articulating for followers the ways to attain those goals (Bass, 1985; Tichy & Devanna, 1986), and 5) the process of influencing an organized group toward accomplishing its goals (Roach & Behling, 1984) (Wren, 1995, p. 41).

However, all of these look at leadership as a cause-and-effect relationship. That is, the leader does something (the cause) which influences a follower to react (effect). Most leadership models have in common the attribute of a all-knowing leader that is wiser than the collective followers (O'Toole, 1996). However, these approaches of defining leadership do not properly or adequately characterize it. These definitions ignore that leadership can and does exist in the activities of equals mutually influencing each other toward a common goal. "In democracies, there is no such thing as a leader, instead there are leaders of leaders (O'Toole, 1996). Although hierarchical relationships in leadership are possible and prevalent, this arrangement is not

required. In contrast, the leadership required today is fellowship between individuals with different organizational roles.

Two different roles exist in an organization: management and leadership (Hesselbein, Goldsmith, & Beckhard, 1996). If management and leadership are not the same, then what distinguishes leadership from management? *It is fellowship*!

Fellowship separates leadership from management, and fellowship is catalyzed when an individual courageously initiates and demonstrates determination in accomplishing a goal. Fellowship happens when others accept the initiator's goal as their own and initiate reciprocal leadership activities using their free will. It is when this fellowship has been established that leadership occurs. Thus, leadership is the courageous determination by an individual in initiating and constructing fellowship toward a common goal, and it is through the love of souls that this fellowship is constructed. Love alone is capable of uniting beings in a manner that completes and fulfills them (Bergquist, 1993).

Conclusion

Leadership is the art of catalyzing and molding a social reality, which requires understanding an organization's communication networks and using these networks to create or change a culture. This requires significant knowledge in organizational and leadership theory.

Many types of knowledge exists, but only knowledge that can be applied in a pragmatic world is useful in leading the construction of culture. Knowledge is pragmatic when the soul creates a metaphor in which both concepts and perceptions support each other.

Cultures or social realities are constructed by the collective and independent willpower of all involved, and by providing an environment in which these souls can find meaning in their work,

leaders catalyze and bias the construction of culture. It is the knowledge of organization and leadership metaphors that enables the understanding and creation of highly effective cultures.

In organizations of today, leaders must create decentralized organizational structures that permit workers to exercise their decision making power. These structures must be based on a new social reality of trust, freedom, and responsibility.

Leadership requires souls with callings for obtaining the necessary knowledge required to catalyze the construction of social realities that recognize the desire of all individuals to have meaning in their work. These souls must be courageous, determined, and capable of developing metaphors for leadership that recognizes that leadership is the construction of fellowship toward a common goal.

Reference

Anderson, W. (1992). *Reality isn't what it used to be : theatrical politics, ready-to-wear religion, global myths, primitive chic and other wonders of the postmodern world*. San Francisco, Calif.: HarperSanFrancisco.

Bergquist, W. H. (1993). *The Postmodern organization : mastering the art of irreversible change* (1st ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Bolman, L. G., & Deal, T. E. (1997). *Reframing organizations : artistry, choice, and leadership* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Dahlgaard, S. M. P., & Dahlgaard, J. J. (1998). Core Values: The precondition for business excellence. *Total Quality Management, 9*(4/5), 51-55.

Frankl, V. E. (1984). *Man's search for meaning*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Gazzaniga, M. S. (1998). *The mind's past*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press.

Giblin, E. J., & Amuso, L. E. (1997). Putting Meaning into Corporate Values. *Business Forum, 22*(1), 14-18.

Handy, C. B. (1996). *Beyond certainty : the changing worlds of organizations*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Heidegger, M., & Krell, D. F. (1993). *Basic writings : from Being and time (1927) to The task of thinking (1964)* (Rev. and expanded ed.). San Francisco, Calif.: HarperSanFrancisco.

Hesselbein, F., Goldsmith, M., & Beckhard, R. (1996). *The leader of the future : new visions, strategies, and practices for the next era*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Hesselbein, F., Goldsmith, M., Beckhard, R., & Peter F. Drucker Foundation for Nonprofit Management. (1997). *The organization of the future* (1st ed.). San Francisco, Calif.: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Hillman, J. (1996). *The soul's code : in search of character and calling* (1st ed.). New York: Random House.

Hotz, R. L. (1996, October 16). The Brain: A Work In Progress; Unraveling the Riddle of Identity. *The Los Angeles Times*.

Lasch, C. (1992). After the Foundations have Crumbled -- Crossing the Postmodern Divide by Albert Borgmann. *Commonweal*(20), 22.

Levoy, G. (1997). *Callings : finding and following an authentic life* (1st ed.). New York: Harmony Books.

Morgan, G. (1998). *Images of organization* (Executive, 1st ed.). San Francisco, Calif.: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.

Moser, P. K., & Vander Nat, A. (1995). *Human knowledge : classical and contemporary approaches* (2nd ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.

O'Toole, J. (1996). *Leading change : the argument for values-based leadership* (1st Ballentine Books ed.). New York: Ballentine Books.

Schein, E. H. (1992). *Organizational culture and leadership* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Winograd, T., & Flores, F. (1986). *Understanding computers and cognition : a new foundation for design*. Norwood, N.J.: Ablex Pub. Corp.

Wren, J. T. (1995). *The leader's companion : insights on leadership through the ages*. New York: Free Press.