

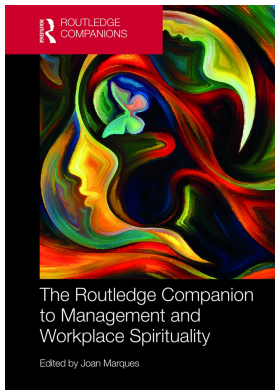
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## **The Routledge Companion to Management and Workplace Spirituality**

Joan Marques

### **Awakening Leadership**

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# 12

## AWAKENING LEADERSHIP

### The Outer Reaches of Inner Space

*Cheryl De Ciantis and Ginger Grant*

#### **Introduction**

The demand for innovation within organizations is a worldwide concern. The pre-conditions necessary for liberating creativity within the organizational context have been well described (Amabile, 1996), but the means for behaviorally engaging personal creativity “on the ground” within organizations are challenging to the managerial/administrative mindset and, paradoxically as this may seem, also to the visionary senior leadership perspective. Disengagement in the workplace is high (Mann & Harter, 2016). It is necessary to dig far deeper to find the sources of engagement in work and life, down to the wellsprings of emotion, empathy and imagination, and to the roots of both individual and collective sense of purpose.

One key issue which may be masked under all the measurement is that empowerment is seen as a neutral concept, a quantifiable factor that is necessarily disconnected from personal values, much the way we conceive of scientific method, regardless that our methods not infrequently have harmful consequences. Empathetic engagement is de-valued and the illusion of logical neutrality is too often disconnected from the real, ethical questions of who benefits from what and how, and why it matters.

Re-querying the wisdom of both myth and ancient philosophy is helpful in finding our way in a complex world. Technologies present both unprecedented opportunities and challenges, but we also still continually face the basic human conundrums and dilemmas that we have wrestled with for millennia, and perennial wisdom still raises fruitful questions about personal individuation and the dynamic nature of both personal and collective power within any given situation. There are no simple answers, there never have been. But there are countless questions that lead to wisdom. The concept of spirituality itself is very difficult to pin down. Recent research finds that, for example, the percentage of people in the US who describe themselves as “spiritual but not religious” is growing (Lipka & Gecewicz, 2017); interestingly 90% of US adults say they believe in some “higher power” though slightly fewer than half attribute daily involvement in their lives on the part of “God.” How “God” is defined varies greatly (Fahmy, 2018).

In this chapter, we posit that we arrive at a spiritual aspect of leadership through two pathways:

1. Self-knowledge of values and unleashing of personal creativity through individuation, and
2. Participating in values-based phronetic dialogue that synergizes the creative instinct for the good of a community.

The ethical dimension of both individuation and phronesis takes account of both internal and external or shared loci of power, driving toward influencing outcomes that are beneficial. This chapter will present the preliminary aspects of a mythic model we have devised and use frequently to capture the tacit value system or what psychologist C. G. Jung called archetypes of transformation (1969b, para. 80) functioning both in individual psyches and in cultures. Much has been written about personified archetypes such as the hero or the outlaw that attempt an explanation as to their complex and multiple meanings (Campbell, 1968; Mark & Pearson, 2001). Archetypes of transformation are not personalities as such, but instead are ways and means, values, situations, or places that symbolize the transformation in question (Jung, 1969b, para. 80). Whether you are dealing with an organizational culture or a nation, finding the core archetypes of transformation that speak to the cultural identity is key. Jung emphasized that archetypes are symbols that cannot be reduced to a single meaning. They are symbols because they are ambiguous—promoting constant explorations as to both historical and current context. These both/and stages involve ongoing interpretation and reinterpretation through dialogue—at the intra-, interpersonal, and intercultural levels of engagement, ensuring participants are engaged in formulating the best possible course of collective action.

### **Methodology**

Phenomenology involves the exploration of human experience though conscious, retrospective reflection. Phenomenological inquiry seeks to examine, understand, and interpret observable special events in our everyday life, with the benefit of sharing the meaning of these phenomena with others. Experiences are individual constructions which can illustrate the essence of an event, embedded into a particular context influencing or affecting experiences and psychological states. Phenomenology is an exploratory approach requiring an open attitude allowing unexpected meanings to emerge. This chapter also takes a Depth Psychology approach in raising questions about processes of individuation—most simply stated, cultivation of self-knowledge—in order to add to practical insights with regard to the meanings and consequences of the spiritual dimension of leadership.

Aristotle described three ways of knowing: episteme, techne, and phronesis. Episteme “concerns universals and the production of knowledge which is invariable in time and space, and which is achieved with the aid of analytical rationality” (Flyvbjerg, 2001, p. 55). Techne has as its objective the “application of technical knowledge and skills according to a pragmatic instrumental rationality” (p. 56). Phronesis is “a true state, reasoned and capable of action with regard to things that are good or bad for man” (p. 2). Our approach is phronetic and inherently dialogical. Aristotle saw phronesis, which he also referred to as prudence or practical wisdom, as the most important of intellectual virtues because its sphere comprises all human affairs, including the management of epistemé (universal truth) and techné (technical know-how) (p. 11). We also follow Bent Flyvbjerg in using the phenomenology of learning formulated by Hubert Dreyfus and Stuart Dreyfus, positing that the basic differences between competence and virtuosity in performance are in large part attributable to the performer’s ability to transcend context-dependent rules and learn to trust and apply individual judgment according to the perceived demands of individual contexts, which in some cases requires that the “rules” be ignored, overridden by circumstantial requirements judged necessary in a given context by an expert practitioner (pp. 9–20).

We will use the heuristics that originated in the Stanford Creativity in Business program (Ray & Myers, 1989) to examine questions such as, how do people in organizational/institutional settings experience personal creativity, leadership, followership, or conflict? Using these

heuristics as a starting point, the participant dictates the context of reflection and explores the belief system that motivates exploration of his or her creative force. This is a constructivist approach to workplace spirituality that seeks to transform the learning experience by having the participants deeply engage with their own story, discovering the foundation of their unique creative capacity.

### Some Misconceptions about Creativity and Innovation

Education is under heavy criticism for failure to produce the workforce needed to meet the innovation challenge. We believe that the solution to this complex problem lies in the human imagination. Imagination and creativity are the seeds of innovation. Creativity is a matter of personal, qualitative “style” rather than the quantifiable notion of “level” that has typically characterized its conceptualization in creativity studies and in culture at large. It is the misconception of level that impels many people who say, “I’m not creative.” Everyone is creative; it is a fundamental human capacity. *How* we are creative is a matter of individual difference and is generated from myriad possible factors in differing contexts (De Ciantis, 2017, p. 143). In a compounded misconception, creativity is generally confused with innovation. It is arguable that innovation is measurable, in novel products and process advances, whereas creativity is an immeasurable drive, which indeed Jung recognized as an “instinct” (Grant, 2005, 2012; Jung, 1969a, para. 245). Innovation is the introduction of visible change that impacts systems, and it relies on a generative combination of individual creativity and interaction within human systems, and as such can be best elucidated by the concept of phronesis.

Western habits of thinking since Plato and Aristotle tend to be categorical and excluding. The result is on one hand a great tradition of scientific advancement. On the other hand, misconceptions persist about the nature and possibilities of emotion, intuition, and the deep sense of spiritual interconnectedness with something larger than themselves that most people feel but are unable to directly access using categorical terms and methods of measurement. Though science can measure the chemistry of emotion, and even the psychological trait of “connectedness” that many of us think of as spirituality may be discerned through socio-psychological typologies such as the Gallup Strengths Finder (Buckingham & Clifton, 2001, p. 92), the deeper meanings of these phenomena remain ineffable. Even the ability to gather and systematize big data is limited by the lack of emotional value in artificial intelligence (AI) algorithmic conceptions (el Kaliouby, 2017)—we may generate and gather data mechanistically but nuanced interpretation, subtle judgment, often leading to deeper questions, is required to sufficiently understand what it means in order to make it actionable.

We have the advantage of Aristotelian episteme, the mode of knowledge that presumes that phenomena possess objective existence in a bounded form whose essential properties can be known through scientific method, and which we can also call “true.” Likewise, we use and value *techné*, the mode of knowledge that is gained through interaction with material phenomena through the application of craft, by means of replicable procedures with reliable rules that can be taught and learned. *Phronesis*, or social/interactive knowing, Aristotle’s third mode of human learning, has been historically less valued; indeed it has been viewed with suspicion as being subjective and therefore unreliable in the quest to find and productively exploit objective “truth” discoverable via episteme and validated through *techné*.

An additional way of knowing that is implicit in Greek thought and literature but evading categorization is *metis*. *Metis* is by nature spontaneous, opportunistic, and evasive, surpassing boundaries and capitalizing on capability based in experience in combination with readiness to seize the moment. The classicists Marcel Detienne and Jean-Pierre Vernant (1978) have shown

Table 12.1 Relationship of Episteme, Techne, Phronesis, and Metis to Objective “Truth”

<i>What is True/ Verifiable:</i>	<i>←</i> ----- <i>Limit of Subjectivity</i>	<i>What is not True/ Unverifiable:</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bounded</li> <li>• Absolute</li> <li>• Objective</li> <li>• Measurable by scientific method</li> </ul>	<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <i>Episteme</i> (universal truth)                             </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <i>Techne</i> (technical know-how based on experience)                             </td> </tr> </table>	<i>Episteme</i> (universal truth)	<i>Techne</i> (technical know-how based on experience)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unbounded</li> <li>• Relative</li> <li>• Subjective</li> <li>• Describable through myth, metaphor and story</li> </ul>
<i>Episteme</i> (universal truth)	<i>Techne</i> (technical know-how based on experience)			

that, though it was not formally categorized by the Greeks as a way of knowing, it is nevertheless recognizable in story, for example in the exploits of “wily” Odysseus, a paradigmatic possessor of metis. Table 12.1 shows the relationship of the respective concepts of episteme, techne, phronesis, and metis to objective “truth” in the Aristotelian sense.

The placement of a “Limit of Subjectivity” between these concept sets suggests that phronetic and metic intelligence may encompass techne and indeed episteme, as each makes use of “proven” theorems and methodologies to suit contextual needs. However, this expansion is unidirectional, since what is objectively verifiable (episteme, techne) by definition does not surpass the limit of subjectivity. This seeming intractable one-sidedness is the fault of the artificial bifurcation of our concepts of knowledge, and our habit of defining rational thinking as a binary proposition that separates “judgment” from “intuition” and places them, mistakenly, in radical opposition (Flyvbjerg, 2001, p. 21). This bias is perpetuated in our psychological typologies (De Ciantis, 2017, pp. 143–44). The combination of techne and metis is often seen as unpredictable and ungovernable, and thereby threatening to the power of the ruling elite. In institutions and organizations the response to this perceived threat often takes the form of discrediting, marginalizing, and expulsion. And, unfortunately, it results in the loss of talent and, with it, competitive advantage (De Ciantis, 2005, p. 184).

### Crossing the “Limit”

The ability to cross the “Limit of Subjectivity” is a matter of maturation. It is natural for people to have personality and cognitive preferences that make them feel relatively more at home with the realm we have labeled “true/verifiable” or “true/unverifiable.” This is described in numerous psychological type indices. It tends to be a general assumption driven by binary thinking that those whose preferences tend toward the more bounded, absolute, and objective may not be able to “cross the line” to value what is unbounded, relative, and subjective. This categorical assumption is not accurate (Hyatt & De Ciantis, 2014). How one operates within and reaches outside of one’s psychological “native” preference or comfort zone can be as varied as each individual’s education, experience, and myriad other factors including the exigencies of context in a given situation. It can equally occur that people whose general preference is for the more unbounded, relative, and subjective may also simply fail to value the “opposite” perspective. What is far more important is to understand the processes by which one is able to find value in a complementary perspective when it differs from their native preference.

In order to build the capacity to understand multiple perspectives, the original “Creativity in Business” program was developed by Michael Ray and Rochelle Myers at the Stanford Graduate School of Business. Creativity in Business is a developmental process designed to leverage both

personal and organizational performance. It is based on the premise that organizational success depends on an individual's ability to connect and sustain a link to that source from which they access what Jung called archetypes of transformation (1969b, para. 80). Core to this process is a set of heuristics ("Live-Withs") that aid in developing self- and other-awareness through practice, reflection, and dialogue that are each done for one week. The keystone set of live-withs are:

1. *Have no expectations.* Participants are asked to notice all of their expectations and ponder how such expectations might limit their perception not only of others but also of their own creative capacity.
2. *Silence the voice of judgment.* Participants are asked to become aware of how their self-judgment operates, the quantity and quality of their criticism of self and others, and question where such judgment originates.
3. *Pay attention.* Participants are challenged to become cultural anthropologists and to pay close attention to the world around them and how they experience it. They are also asked to do one thing differently each day and take note of their responses to change.
4. *Ask penetrating questions.* Participants are reminded of the creative child within that asked so many questions without fear. The ability to ask penetrating questions uncovers deeper conditions where creative possibilities may be hidden, particularly in groups. Phronetic dialogue starts here with the ability to ask "what if?" and then explore the results with the group. The foundations of trust are built here as participants re-learn to ask questions without fear of judgment.

In this process, the participant dictates the context of reflection and explores the belief system that motivates exploration of her or his creative force. Participants are asked to explore their attitude and experiences about judgment, fear of change, imagination, spontaneity, and links to individual passion and purpose; a spiritual quest of potential and possibility experienced through a 10-week reflective journey. The participants discover the foundation of their creative capacity and eventually expand their capacity for innovation.

### **The Call to Adventure—Individuation and Liberating Individual Creativity**

C. G. Jung defined individuation as "the process by which individual beings are formed and differentiated [from other human beings]; in particular, it is the development of the psychological individual as a being distinct from the general, collective psychology" (1953, para. 757). Depth Psychology, following Jung, valorizes myths, dreams, and the stories we tell ourselves about ourselves as valid and relevant in process, throughout the course of a lifetime, of continually developing one's unique identity.

According to Joseph Campbell, one of myth's functions is to enforce a moral order within each successive coherent social group, within the context of its unique geographical and historical place. "The rise and fall of civilizations in the long, broad course of history can be seen to have been largely a function of the integrity and cogency of their supporting canons of myth" (Campbell, 1968, p. 5). A mythic canon persists as long as it has the power to inspire individual members of a group to experience a harmonious connection with the social order and their place in the universe. Myth is a cultural preserver, a kind of "glue" that adheres individuals to individuals and all to community identity (Grant, 2005).

The world, however, changes, and myth too changes under historical pressure. Campbell points out that when the canonical myth ceases to hold meaning for at least some members of

the community or produces “deviant” effects, what arises is both a sense of dissociation and an urge toward a renewed quest for “meaning” (1968, p. 5). Campbell points toward historical times of dissolution as productive of new myths. In other words, one of the functions of myth is to generate new myths. Campbell uses the example of Christian Europe in the twelfth century, when “beliefs no longer universally held were universally enforced” (p. 5). Many people lost faith in Scripture, giving rise to what Campbell calls the “Waste Land” theme in the imagery of the Grail legend: a theme of spiritual death, of wandering, and “waiting, waiting.” Campbell asserts that the work of Rousseau in the mid-18th century marks a further dissolution, this time a loss of faith in reason. Society came to be seen as a corrupting influence, and new myths appeared, of the “noble savage,” the “natural man” (p. 5). These myths expressed a desire to return to an imagined state of nature, expressed in the creative impulse toward speculative fantasies like Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*. According to Campbell, we still live in the larger epoch of dissolution, dissatisfaction, and yearning for meaning.

The status quo function of myth is embodied in the culture. The transforming function of myth originates with individuals. Campbell’s “creative mythology” is not a product of the normative voice of the culture, but arises from the “insights, sentiments, thought, and vision of an adequate individual, loyal to his own experience of value” (p. 7). This individual voice provides a corrective to empty, left-over shells of forms that no longer inspire meaningful engagement. Unlike traditional forms of knowing, a myth remains alive not because it is completely fixed in meaning but because it is plastic and can be retold, rewritten, reinterpreted, remade, and told again (De Ciantis, 2005, p. 179). The Grail myth, more popularly known as *The Hero/ine’s Journey*, can be read as a model for individuation (Grant, 2005, 2014, 2017).

Building on the work of Joseph Campbell, the Heroic Journey is a model or map that we find provides easy access by ordinary people to the world of mythological systems. Used as a life-stage model it resonates with any individual in an organizational setting, regardless of age or

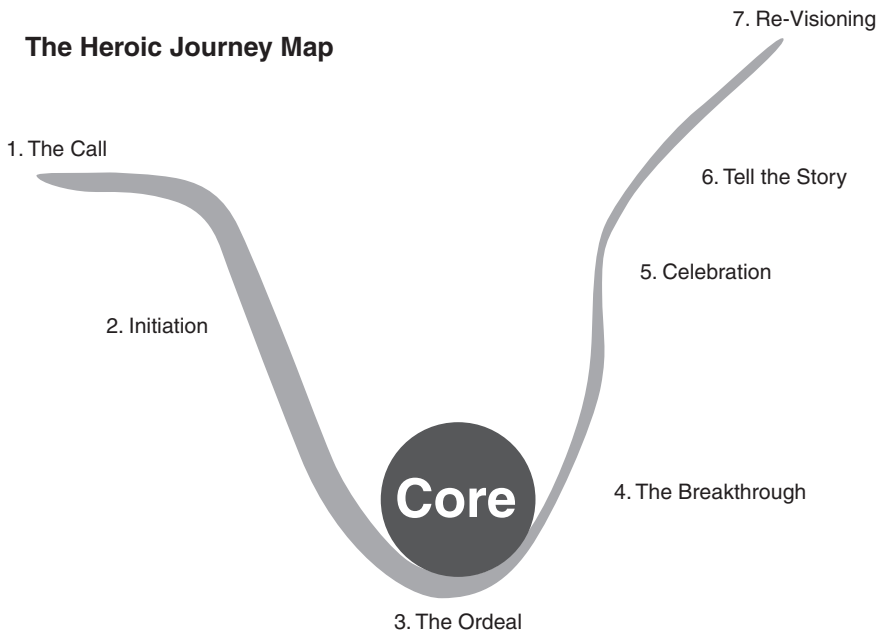


Figure 12.1 The Grail Myth

race (Grant, 2005). The map can be used to model the path of an individual, a team, a division, or of an organization. In the telling of the “journey,” an archetype of transformation is introduced that permits a new myth to emerge from the fertile grounds of the old. Our ability to make new meaning—new myths—mythopoesis, is revealed and can now be used to enhance creative capacity in service of innovation.

Myths are not just told; they are felt, resonating through the body as well as the mind (Grant, 2005, p. 1). In our experience, traditional business teachings omit emotion from learning. Many have tried to “teach” creativity which results in a prescriptive focus on tools and processes but has limited, if any, emotional engagement. Capturing emotion is a necessary component as the creative drive is intrinsic, it originates from within. We concur with the view that “denial of feelings is denial of learning” (Boud, Keogh, & Walker, 1985, p. 15). How, then, to introduce emotion back into a business environment? Our answer is practice, practice, practice. There are many ways to break out of habits of thinking to arrive at transformative insights. Arts methodologies are very useful in circumventing habits of thought expressed in self-talk by immersion in image and gesture. The Creativity in Business heuristics are a particularly effective way to elicit reflection, particularly among groups such as business students, since they provide relatively simple, text-based instructions for practice which feels safe for the participant, who is not asked to express reflections in an unfamiliar medium.

What follows in Tables 12.2 and 12.3 are examples of some of the initial insights of business baccalaureate students participating in a 10-week course using these heuristics.

The 10-week course culminates in participants presenting an individual, creative project capturing their experiences, often taking the form of a video. The following are a sample of student responses to the question, “What did you learn about yourself?”

What these reflections show is that, in short, the “story” has changed for participants. A final comment summarizes a commonly expressed conclusion: “Now I know what to do.”

The Greek concept of *metis*, often translated as “cunning intelligence,” is named for the shape-shifting Okeanids of Greek mythology, such as the Old Man of the Sea who knows all, the sea-nymph Metis, with her daughter, Athena, the goddess of strategy who takes on differing guises to advise and direct mortals like her protégé Odysseus, famed for his cunning (De Ciantis, 2017, p. 136). In the learning stages described by Dreyfus and Dreyfus—(1) Novice, (2) Advanced Beginner, (3) Competent Performer, (4) Proficient Performer, and (5) Expert—possession of *metis* may be said to characterize experts, who “exhibit thinking and behavior that is rapid, intuitive, holistic, interpretive, and visual,” having surpassed the “slow, analytical reasoning which characterizes rational problem-solving and the first three levels of the learning process” (cited in Flyvbjerg, 2001, p. 14). *Techne*—the ability to manipulate tools via replicable rules and techniques (De Ciantis, 2017, p. 137)—is assimilated into intuitive mastery: I know what to do *without thinking about it*. Instead of learning only from textbooks, the student now learns from life.

Though relatively little research has been done on the long-term impact programs that can be termed “non-traditional” in their approach, a research study combining qualitative and quantitative analysis on the impact of a leadership development program (“LeaderLab”) conducted at the Center for Creative Leadership between 1992 and 2000 (Burnside & Guthrie, 1992) found that three to four months after the program, two program elements received a higher value-rating from participants than they had at the program conclusion. Elements that incorporated non-traditional modalities (“artistic activities”) leading to personal storytelling in the context of a small peer-group facilitated by a “Process Advisor” (a professional executive coach) were shown to increase in value after the fact, compared with Action Planning, which was rated lower in perceived value 3 to 4 months later than it had been rated at the time of the



Table 12.2 Examples of Initial Insights of Business Baccalaureate Students

<i>Week 1: Have No Expectations</i>	<i>Week 2: Stamp Out the Voice of Judgment</i>	<i>Week 3: Pay Attention</i>	<i>Week 4: Ask Penetrating Questions</i>
<p>“I found over the weekend a numerous amount of times where I would assume there was one right answer or one right outcome. After adopting an open mindset I noticed a change in the people around me as well as myself.”</p> <p>“I like the idea of giving and not worrying about what you’ll get back.”</p>	<p>“I can see now that we form judgments based on a small percentage of the facts. We lack insight into the situation or person we are dealing with or we don’t fully understand their story.”</p> <p>“My main problem is being too harsh or critical of myself.”</p> <p>“I have to remind myself that I am always learning and investigating new concepts, and that being open to different ideas only makes me a better person.”</p>	<p>“It was comforting to reconnect with myself at a deeper level and remind myself about how far I have come in my 23 years of life. This exercise brought me back down to earth and has helped me regain focus about where I want to go in life.”</p> <p>“I learned the difference between ‘spending time with someone’ and ‘being with someone.’”</p>	<p>“This live-with taught me the importance of understanding problems from differing points of view.”</p> <p>“Sometimes what is obvious to one may not be obvious to another. Everyone is brought up differently with different experiences.”</p>

Table 12.3 Sample of Student Responses to the Question, “What Did You Learn About Yourself?”

<i>Identity Formation</i>	<i>Self-Confidence</i>	<i>Adaptability to Change</i>	<i>Owning One’s Creative Capacity</i>
<p>“I now know who I am. I’m a girl who wants love and respect in her life and relationships. I’m a girl who is going to take her life in her hands, and rock it.”</p> <p>“I am writing my story of the life I want to live with my dreams, my knowledge, my courage, my love, my faith to make every page just as amazing as the last one written. No regrets.”</p> <p>“I am thankful that I had the opportunity to do all these live-withs, because they all taught me something different. I realized that kind of person I am, what I need to improve, and how I want to approach things in the future.”</p>	<p>“The weekly live-withs have helped me deal and cope with worrying, and I’ve found myself worrying less and less as the weeks went by.”</p> <p>“All in all, this course has helped shape me into a better and more suited person for the fast-paced business world.”</p> <p>“I am a different person now than I started out at the beginning of this semester and this is all because of a few simple activities I completed every week. I am excited to see what life holds just around the corner now that I feel more empowered than ever before.”</p>	<p>“I found that the live-withs opened my mind, and let me explore different options and situations which I may, and probably would never have gone out of my way to do.”</p> <p>“I believe that the live-withs really helped me. Each week, I either discovered something new about myself or I overcame something that I was struggling with.”</p> <p>“Usually I learned everything straight from the textbooks, and lectures. I loved how during the course of these ten weeks, I learned by using life.”</p> <p>“As I come full circle and reflect on all of the past live-withs, I discover how simple and impactful change can be.”</p>	<p>“I assumed I knew the best ways to bring out my creativity, but with these exercises I learned some new techniques. I’ve learned a lot about myself in the past few months and I thank these exercises for that. I now have a better sense of who I am and who I want to be, and I feel more creative than ever.”</p> <p>“I never thought I was creative. This changes everything!”</p>

program conclusion (Young & Dixon, 1996). Significantly, these elements combined both individual creative exploration in a safe environment with dialogue within the facilitated peer-group. The dialogue was initiated by a simple, open-ended question: what happened for you?

The emphasis is on the “why” of the reflective process—questioning current beliefs about creativity and innovation, and, more fundamentally, about the search for personal meaning. Are spiritual beliefs and practices still valid under the current context? The answers are sometimes surprising. We may pause to note that the transformative moment in the Grail myth occurs when Gawain faces the shapeshifting hideous hag at the well and is able to answer her question of which shape he would prefer, with the statement “the choice must be yours my lady, for it is your body” (Grant, 2017, p. 7). The question and reply represents a shift in emphasis from command and control to the individual claiming personal power.

### ***Making the Move to Phronesis***

Reason and Hawkins (1988) believe that the primary key to using narrative in learning is allowing meaning to develop using reflective dialogue. Through dialogue, we increase our knowledge of self and enhance our relationship to others. We practice our power to choose.

The ancient practice of dialogue remains more than ever on the growing edge of cultural attainment. Increasingly we face problems that outdistance the individual power of any of us to solve. It can be said that the process of dialogue in fact begins internally. Hannah Arendt took special notice of the instance when Socrates recounts that when he goes home alone at the end of the day, he nevertheless finds himself in company (1971, p. 188). It is a voice within him which questions the assertions he made during his day in the Symposium. This “fellow” “asks me whether I am not ashamed of my audacity in talking about a beautiful way of life when questioning makes it evident that I do not even know the meaning of the word ‘beauty.’” Thus Socrates questions even *himself*, in an internal dialogue. By contrast, his colleague Hippias enjoys peaceful quiet at night, content in the fact that no internal voice questions his daylight assertions. This internal process may be said to be a spiritual practice, whereby one comes to know oneself, and creates the conditions for being open to know others.

To know oneself requires circumambulation—the act of circling a referent—and defines boundaries of a space by relating to a center of value. Common in most religions, circumambulation is used to define a sacred space. Jung thought that the idea of the “circumambulatio” was to find your center and thus define a container for the Psyche (Grant, 2005, p. 25). A visual analogy would be something akin to peeling the skin from an onion in order to find the center. To find the tacit components of what is valued in an organization, a direct linear approach will not work. You must go “deeper,” under the superficial skin in order to find out what is OK, not OK, and, more importantly, why. There is an emotional charge in what is valued and it must be approached indirectly and with an open mind that can “hear” the unconscious as well as conscious content. This dialogue between the core community identity and the aspects of identity that are changeable results in a field of common understanding—a place where participants can meet and continue the conversation. Psyche demands a system of both/and, not either/or. A phronetic dialogue creates this space that can hold the tension of the opposites, allowing the potential realization of both. It is through dialogue that we can create the conditions for crossing the Limit of Subjectivity—in either direction.

This phronetic process was learned by participants through the discussion of the live-withs. In the case of the business students, this was the first time that they had been encouraged to reveal and discuss what was most important to them as individuals. A variety of discussions were held in pairs, triads, small groups, and eventually the entire class. Each student worked with their

own “story,” their journey toward the future that they had yet to articulate. Through the discussions, archetypes of transformation—values—were revealed. If the values could not be clearly articulated, images were used to represent the attempt at expression. More discussions were the result, in an iterative process of circumambulation. As the individual value systems were explored and discussed, group values became articulated. As group values surfaced and were made clear, group norms were established and maintained. It is important to note that the role of the facilitator in this process is vitally important. Not to lead per se; rather, to support the emergent process. A safe space for these discussions needs to be created and then held in order for creativity to emerge and flourish. The processes are iterative: circumambulation is in its nature a repetitive movement.

In his seminal work, *Making Social Science Matter* (2001), Bent Flyvbjerg states that the principle objective for social science in using a phronetic lens is to carry out analysis and interpretations of values and beliefs aimed at social commentary and social action. Our study draws on Flyvbjerg’s elaboration of phronesis as the mode of inquiry “that opens up discussion of the ‘good or bad for man’ through exploration of the structures of power and rationality inherent in interactions between groups and individuals”; and allows for education of individual managers *not* as “morally neutral technician(s)” but rather as capable of engaging with complexities to make decisions according to the differing conditions presented in a given situation (Sliwa & Cairns, 2009, p. 229). Phronesis is the vehicle whereby our individual insights are made available; indeed often given voice and form for the first time within the vessel of phronetic dialogue. Once given voice, they are available for shared reflection, query, and evaluation grounded in real conditions. With regard to creating conditions for change that has the potential to serve the good of humankind in countless ways, phronetic dialogue puts the wheels on the bus.

### *Values, Contexts, and Power*

Flyvbjerg (2001, p. 60) proposes the application of methodological guidelines for phronetic studies in which the following questions are addressed:

1. Where are we going?
2. Is this desirable?
3. What should be done?

However, these questions are not sufficient to the realities of context. Context here refers to the unique situation at hand with which a phronetic dialogue is concerned. What problem are we addressing? Who are the stakeholders? Where and in what relationships are they situated? What is the history of the problem? Generally, our Western, cultural definition of rationality assumes that we can apply consistent rules to problem situations to achieve solutions. But the realities “on the ground” render this assumption inadequate. Dialogues by nature do not have determined outcomes. The use of heuristics, especially “asking penetrating questions,” tends to reveal not only previously unknown facts, but also surfaces information about attitudes, assumptions, and the values underlying them. For example, a dialogue about values may surface hitherto unrecognized differences in how participants define a value such as honesty. We may think we share the value; when asking the question “What does this mean to you?” may in fact surface entirely unexpected results. For example, a core value of honesty in one person’s definition may be combined with an equally strong value of independence, while for another honesty combines with respect (Hyatt & De Ciantis, 2014, pp. 56–57). These differing values’ definitions

produce very different attitudes and behaviors that underlie each participant's ultimate objectives with regard to the outcome of the dialogue and desires as to the decisions that may result from it. According to Aristotle, the study of human activity "demands that one practice phronesis, that is, that one occupy oneself with values as a point of departure for praxis. And Aristotle considered that values and human behavior must be seen in relation to the particular" (Flyvbjerg, 2001, p. 70).

It is necessary too to distinguish between the intentions of participants in dialogue. If phronesis is directed by definition toward good for humankind, it becomes necessary to discern whether a participant intends *manipulation* (having hidden agenda, withholding information) or *coercion* (compulsion via threat or action). The Aristotelian definition indicates that *influence* is the correct intention with which to undertake phronetic dialogue: sharing information and allowing for possible alternative outcomes (an example of the "have no expectations" heuristic). Making these distinctions allows for influence to remain constructive and positive (K. Hyatt, private conversation). Holding an intention for positive influence returns personal power to the participants.

Flyvbjerg strongly argues that in real social settings, the realities of who holds power and what influences power relationships and structures may have on the outcomes must be examined and evaluated. This is the critical difference between social science as description and social science as uniquely effective in creating the conditions to achieve specific, desired changes in local contexts. Attitudes toward power can be seen at the core of phronesis. It thus becomes necessary to reappraise our societal assumptions toward power as being singular, centered, and static; often concentrated in individual roles and designated entities (for example, heads of state or officials), rather than dynamic and relational. In the West, we often view power as restrictive and negative, as in the view that "power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely." Instead, awakened leaders must see power also as productive and positive; and, as distributed among heterogeneous individuals and groups of individuals with genuinely shared interests and values. Flyvbjerg (2001, p. 131) contributes additional caveats necessary to understanding the actual nature of power as follows:

- Power is viewed as a dense net of omnipresent relations and not only as localized in "centers" and institutions, or an entity one can "possess."
- The concept of power is seen as ultradynamic; power is not only something one appropriates, but also something one reappropriates and exercises in a constant back-and-forth movement in relations of strength, tactics, and strategies.
- Knowledge and power, truth and power, rationality and power are analytically inseparable from each other; power produces knowledge, and knowledge produces power.
- The central question is how power is exercised, and not only who has power, and why they have it; the focus is on process in addition to structure.
- Power is studied with a point of departure in small questions, "flat and empirical," not only, nor primarily, with a point of departure in "big questions."

It is only when participants see themselves as potentially, personally powerful and capable of influencing that they may become part of an actual, informal power node or a more formal power structure. This is how things change. Thus, the questions that necessarily must be added to phronetic dialogue aimed at real change become (Flyvbjerg, 2001, p. 131):

- Who gains, and who loses?
- Through what kinds of power relations?

- What possibilities are available to change existing power relations?
- And is it desirable to do so?
- Of what kinds of power relations are those asking questions themselves a part?

These are not easy questions to put forward. Convenors, facilitators, coaches, teachers, and group or team members need to create foundational conditions of safety in order for phronetic dialogue to occur. This involves confidentiality, as for example in structured values dialogues where the actual content of conversations is held as privileged and not to be repeated outside the dialogue setting without express permission. Phronetic dialogues must be conducted with the caveat of non-judgment, meaning that no question or statement may be considered a priori as more accurate or worthy than any other; rather, dialogue is conducted within the boundaries of well-understood, agreed-upon, and enforced norms (Hyatt & De Ciantis, 2014, pp. 14–16). These norms may range from refraining from profanity or ad hominem assertions to, for example as in the case of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (1995) processes, access to application for amnesty in exchange for truth-telling by perpetrators of human rights abuses.

### *The Power of Story*

To use the Heroic Journey Model provides this safe container to explore and document the path forward. The purpose of story has always been to act as a bridge between the past and the future. It is the stories of old that carry the cultural value system into the present and on into the future, recontextualized to suit the time at hand. Why is this important now? Our mode of production has shifted to organizational knowledge creation. In this new economic environment that is continuously unfolding, a traditional mode of production thinking is increasingly recognized as potentially counter-productive. A new paradigm is needed, one that recognizes that the future belongs to people who use their hearts as well as their heads. Awareness of this shift is the key to realizing a new paradigm. Using story transforms business and executive education and deepens the learning experience in a current context (McDrury & Alterio, 2002). White (1987, p. 1) suggests

narrative might well be considered a solution to a problem of general human concern, namely the problem of how to translate *knowing* into *telling*, the problem of fashioning human experience into a form assimilable to structures of meaning that are generally human.

Narrative is an ancient method and a seminal form for sense making of experiences. Our research taps into the narratives of individuals as well as our own. Flyvbjerg reminds us that “good narratives typically approach the complexities and contradictions of real life” (2001, p. 84). Often such narratives may be difficult to summarize as they offer multiple interpretations that are diverse and sometimes conflicting. Therefore, this complexity leaves ample space for not only the researchers and the narrators but also the readers to make different interpretations and draw different conclusions. To use narrative as a tool for learning is to take seriously the need for students to make sense of their experiences and thus create meaning. By “story” we do not mean a whole-cloth beginning–middle–end structure; rather an iterative, evolving fabric of sense-making. Forming one’s story or forming the story of a group is a lifelong process, which is aided by being spoken, and heard. This may be the essence of phronetic learning.

## **Implications**

A number of precepts are emerging and therefore underpin and inform our ongoing practice (Grant, 2017):

1. Authenticity and integrity occur when individuals develop self-awareness together with an ability to pay attention to others and the current operating context. This attentiveness enables them to examine a situation from all angles, and communicate a clear vision of what needs to be done.
2. Potential change agents need tools to help them become more reflective and attentive. They need to journey into their own hearts, minds, and psyches to discover their core beliefs and perceptual filters to better understand and use the shared myths and stories that can align and inspire an organization to perform beyond the norm.
3. Those who wish to influence need to inspire, which is different from motivating. This ability to inspire is determined by integrity of character (who we are, what we stand for, and how we act), realizing an alignment of passion, purpose, and the presence of trust. People see who we are and make judgments about our message accordingly. In other words, “it’s not what we say, it’s what we do.”
4. Organizations will not achieve results unless their practices, policies, and procedures reflect their espoused values and purpose and unless those values are aligned with those of their employees and other stakeholders. When actual values differ from espoused values, the actual values will be reflected in the stories stakeholders tell. The same occurs when espoused and actual values are aligned. One need only listen.

## **Conclusion**

We have stated that spiritual wisdom resides in two critical factors, self-actualization (individuation) and the ability to ask a dialogic question: a question to which we do not already know the answer. Traditional business courses do not address these factors and, in most cases, avoid them. It has been our experience that the solution to this complex problem lies in the human imagination. We know that imagination and creativity are the seeds of innovation and it is time for educators to provide leadership based on hope and aspiration if we are to reach the untapped creative potential in our people. The participants in reflective practice programs such as “Creativity in Business” confirm our beliefs and ask for more. There is much work ahead of us—in academe and in industry.

We use the Stanford Creativity in Business program to examine questions such as, how do participants experience personal creativity, leadership, followership or conflict? In this instance creativity, leadership, followership, or conflict is the phenomenon of interest, but is a psychological abstraction. For example, what do you experience when you face conflict in teams? Here the meaning of conflict is being examined, the experience of facing conflict, as opposed to accepting the abstract word as conclusive. It is through such experiences that insights are obtained, spiritual sources reclaimed, and new practices defined. Social capital is built on these active connections among people that bind human networks and communities. Perhaps we need to reclaim something old in order to build something new. And what could be more practical than claiming the power inherent in your own story?

Performance storyteller and storytelling coach Doug Lipman, whose work is informed by Hasidic mystical tradition, retells the story of the Rabbi Zusia, who after a dream becomes fearful of what question the angels will ask him when he dies. His students gather around,

seeking to comfort him by soothing the source of his trouble of mind, and in doing so they ask the same great question that in mystic Christian tradition, Parsifal, whose attainment of wisdom is long and arduous, at last asks of the spiritually wounded Grail King: “Master, what ails thee?” (Grant, 2017). Zusia’s answer is that the angels who in his dream flank the gates of paradise do not ask him why he was not in life a Moses to his people, nor why he was not a Joshua. Instead, they ask him: “Why were you not Zusia?”

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