

CHARLOTTE D. SHELTON, JOHN R. DARLING and W. EARL WALKER

# Foundations of Organizational Excellence: Leadership Values, Strategies, and Skills

## ABSTRACT

*The key to organizational excellence is excellent leadership and at the heart of excellent leadership lie four foundational values – joy, hope, peace and love. This article provides numerous examples of both historical and contemporary leaders who have used these values to create excellence. However, positive values, though necessary, are not sufficient. In order to achieve remarkable results, these values must be translated into congruent behaviors. To do so requires new leadership strategies and skills – strategies and skills that will enable leaders to rise above the status quo and create high performance organizations. Four transformational leadership strategies and seven quantum skills are introduced. These values, strategies and skills can enable twenty-first century leaders to create new levels of organizational excellence by harnessing the most powerful energy in the universe – the energy of the Mind.*

**CHARLOTTE D. SHELTON**, Assistant Professor

Helzberg School of Management Rockhurst University Kansas City, Missouri

• e-mail: charlotte.shelton@rockhurst.edu

**JOHN R. DARLING**, Distinguished Professor

Helzberg School of Management Rockhurst University Kansas City, Missouri

• e-mail: john.darling@rockhurst.edu

**W. EARL WALKER**, Dean and Robert A. Jolley Professor

School of Business Administration The Citadel Charleston, South Carolina

• e-mail: walkerw@citadel.edu

## INTRODUCTION

Organizational excellence is difficult to define and even more difficult to achieve. Whether excellence is defined as profitability, market share, customer/employee satisfaction, or product innovation, it is commonly sought by leaders, but rarely found. Yet, twenty-first-century leaders continue to search for excellence like knights of yore searching for the Holy Grail, experimenting with change processes in an oft never-ending sequence of flavor-of-the-month interventions. During the course of the past two decades Quality Circles, Self-Directed Work Teams, Total Quality Management, Process Improvement, and Reengineering have been frequently used by leaders in their attempts to create excellence. Though each of these interventions has value, none of them have proven to be a direct path to excellence. All of them focus on changing the organization – its people, processes, or products. None of them focus on changing the leader's basic way of being – his or her worldview.

This article purports that organizational excellence is an inside job. It is primarily the result of an internal paradigm shift – a shift that occurs first in the minds of the leaders, eventually permeating the minds of a critical mass of organizational stakeholders. The foundational premise of this belief, grounded in postmodern philosophy, is the idea that organizations are social constructions which mirror the collective beliefs of the stakeholders – beliefs about what it is possible to achieve (i.e., beliefs about excellence).

Contemporary leadership theories and practices are essentially by-products of cultural modernism. Most twenty-first century leaders are unfamiliar with postmodern philosophy and its corresponding leadership implications. Society in general, and business schools in particular, still espouse objectivity and rationality, the basic tenets of cultural modernism. However, from the postmodern perspective, it is impossible to determine the existence of an objective reality; hence, rationality is viewed as a function of cultural tradition. Gergen (2001, pp. 805–806) comments:

To speak of the world or mind at all requires language. Such words as *matter* and *mental processes* are not mirrors of the world, but constituents of language systems. To speak, then, of the material world and causal relations is not to describe accurately what there is, but to participate in a textual genre – to draw from the immense repository of intelligibilities that constitute a particular cultural tradition... In this sense, what one takes to be real, what one believes to be transparently true about human functioning, is a by-product of communal construction.

In other words, language is the vehicle through which leaders and followers construct an organizational reality. Goss (1994, p.19) purports that language is the only leverage for changing organizations. She writes: "This is because people apprehend and construct reality through

the way they speak and listen. Or, as Martin Heidegger put it, 'Language is the house of being.' On a day-to-day basis, you can alter the way you are *being* by altering the conversations in which you are engaged."

Therefore, when higher levels of excellence are desired, postmodern leaders can use the power of language to not only birth a new vision of excellence, but also to enable their stakeholders to begin to change the way they think about and talk about the future; thus, transcending the limitations of the past and engaging in a transformative journey of mind. This journey is primarily an ontological journey – a journey that explores the nature of reality. The outcome of this journey is the discovery that language and perceptual processes play a primary role in reality construction. Hence, the journey to organizational excellence is an inside job. It begins with a paradigm shift for the leader; however, lasting success is contingent upon a majority of stakeholders learning to "change their minds." Thus enabling them to actually see, think, feel, act, trust, and be in profoundly new ways.

## LEADERSHIP AND THE NEW SCIENCE

Twentieth-century scientific discoveries support the postmodern view of reality. Since the 1920s quantum physicists have demonstrated the subjectivity of the subatomic realm by demonstrating that energy behaves according to the expectations of the observer (Capra, 1982, p. 87; Wolf, 1989, p. 129; Zukav, 1979, p. 310). More recent research in neuropsychology lends further credence to the subjectivity of external reality. Llinas' research suggests that all that people see, hear, touch, taste, or smell is purely a mental construction. He comments: "Light is nothing but electromagnetic radiation. Colors clearly don't exist outside our brains, nor does sound" (in Lemonick, 1995, p. 52). Llinas' research, using a highly sensitive device called a magnetoencephalograph, which measures electrical currents in the brain, supports his belief that human consciousness is a state that corresponds with external reality but never fully captures that reality. It would appear that human perceptions are shaped more by information already in the brain than by external stimuli (Wheatley and Kellner-Rogers, 1996, p. 49).

In spite of the fact that postmodern philosophy, quantum mechanics, and research in human perception all support a new view of reality, few leadership applications were developed until the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Wheatley's (1992) ground-breaking work was the first to use quantum mechanical concepts as a metaphor for a new way of thinking about leadership while Srivastva and Cooperrider (1999) were among the first to apply social constructionism to leadership. In the past few years numerous other authors (Goldstein, 1994; Jaworski, 1996; Stacey, 1996; Zohar, 1997; Sanders, 1998; Shelton, 1999) have developed theories and models of leadership based on a postmodern/new science ontology. However, few new lead-

ership skills have emerged. The purpose of this article is to introduce seven new skills and to review their underlying values and strategies. These new quantum leadership skills can enable twenty-first century leaders to transcend the box of modernist thinking and create organizational excellence by harnessing the most powerful energy in the universe – the energy of the Mind.

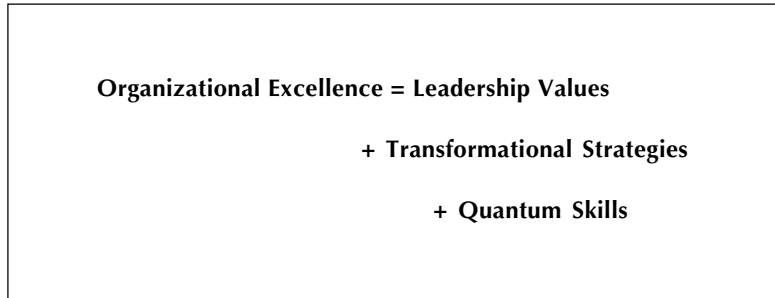
## THE FOUNDATIONAL VALUES

The key to organizational excellence is excellent leadership and at the heart of excellent leadership lie four universal values – joy, hope, peace and love. In this context, *joy* is defined as a spirit of gladness – a state of deep happiness that is not contingent upon external circumstances. *Hope* is defined as optimism – the belief that one can positively impact the future. *Peace* is defined as a freedom from inner conflict – a sense of well-being, and security. *Love* is defined as a spirit of appreciation, acceptance, respect, kindness, and support. Successful leaders realize that these values can inspire, unify, and transform.

History is replete with examples of leaders who used these values to create extraordinary results. Jesus, Mohandas Gandhi, Mother Teresa, Abraham Lincoln, and Martin Luther King, Jr. are only a few of the religious and political leaders who have translated these internal values into external accomplishments. There are corporate examples as well. Sam Walton (Wal-Mart), Mary Kay Ash (Mary Kay Cosmetics) and Herb Kelleher (Southwest Airlines) are three well-known business leaders who demonstrate the power of bringing joy, hope, peace, and love into the workplace.

In spite of their demonstrated relationship to excellence, relatively few leaders are modeling these values in 21<sup>st</sup> century organizations. It seems highly unlikely that corporate leaders prefer despair over hope or sadness rather than joy. Yet many contemporary companies fail to achieve excellence because their cultures are permeated with despair, conflict, sadness and fear. The leaders of these organizations often espouse positive values while modeling destructive behaviors. Why is it so hard for so many leaders to “walk their talk?” Why is there so little joy, hope, peace, and love in the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace?

This article purports that positive leadership values are prerequisite to organizational excellence. However, positive values, though necessary, are not sufficient. In order to achieve remarkable results, these values must be translated into congruent behaviors. To do so requires new leadership strategies and skills – strategies and skills that will enable leaders to rise above the status quo and create high performance organizations (see Figure 1).



**FIGURE 1. Foundations of Organizational Excellence.**

## TRANSFORMATIONAL STRATEGIES

Successful leaders not only model positive values, they translate these values into transformational strategies that enable them to infuse their values into the fabric of the organizational culture (Cornesky *et al.*, 1990, pp. 58–59; Peters and Austin, 1985, pp. 5–6). But what are the means? What are the transformational strategies that enable a leader to lead in new, more effective ways? Bennis and Nanus (1985, pp. 26–79) discuss four transformational leadership strategies: *attention through vision, meaning through communication, trust through positioning, and confidence through respect*. Leaders who utilize these strategies create high performance organizations with cultures characterized by committed people, constant innovation and customer care (Peters and Waterman, 1982). In these cultures of excellence, *joy, hope, peace, and love* abound (Batten, 1989, pp. 129–132; Snyder, 1994, pp. 86–95).

### **Attention through Vision**

Excellent leaders have a vision that captures the attention of their stakeholders (Walker, 1986, pp. 8–10; Gitlow and Gitlow, 1987, pp. 19–25). The intensity of a leader’s vision is contagious. Vision focuses attention (O’Reilly and Pfeffer, 2000, pp. 232–45)! Initially it focuses the leader’s, but then the leader’s *joy* and enthusiasm attract others and encourage them to make a commitment to organizational excellence (Ohmae, 1990, pp. 56–58).

General Electric’s recent chairman, Jack Welch, demonstrated the power of this strategy. He claimed that the men and women of GE used dreams to set business targets – with no real idea of how to achieve these dreams (Shelton, *Quantum Leaps*, p. 30). Welch’s vision for his company was based on three principles – stretch, speed, and boundarylessness. Welch believed this vision helped to build a workforce with an “absolutely infinite capacity to improve everything.” GE’s success is primarily a function of Welch’s attention-getting vision.

Visionary leaders involve diverse groups of stakeholders in the visioning process. They also seek stakeholder involvement in developing organizational plans to execute the vision, knowing that people will be more committed to meeting goals if they have a part in determining them. The resulting opportunities that people have to express their talents and abilities within the organization bring with them the *joy* of creating – of producing something that is uniquely the product of their giftedness (Kelley and Spencer, 2000, p. 18).

### **Meaning through Communication**

Organizational excellence requires leaders to communicate the vision in a way that induces *hope*. Sam Walton exemplified this leadership ability. His vision generated a “yes, we can, Sam” response from his associates. Leaders like Walton believe that all people have enormous potential waiting to be unleashed, and they use meaningful communication to activate and harness the energy of *hope*.

Information is the vehicle that turns *hope* into action. Successful organizations require coordinated action, and coordinated action depends on the existence of shared meaning and common interpretations of reality (Nurmi and Darling, 1997, p. 58). People need to access and use information via the communication process in order to achieve perceptual alignment and thus create a common focus (McLagan and Nel, 1995, pp. 47–48). Communication is, therefore, the primary way in which any group of individuals, small or large, can become aligned with and motivated to achieve the goals of the organization.

Successful leaders share information freely. They view it as a currency to be spent rather than a resource to be hoarded. They practice open-door management and open-book finances, providing their associates with the financial literacy skills that they need to make informed decisions (Stack, 1992; Semler, 1993). Shared access to information facilitates the successful execution of the vision by creating *meaning through communication*.

### **Trust through Positioning**

A key factor in the process of establishing *trust through positioning* is integrity (Bennis and Biederman, 1997, pp. 200–201). Words associated with integrity are themselves interesting: the quality of being complete, unimpaired, moral soundness, honesty, freedom from corrupting influence or practice, and predictable strictness in the fulfillment of contracts and the discharge of trusts. There is no greater need in leaders than the need for integrity. It is, in a sense, the assurance that what one sees, what is said to be, is something that can be counted on without qualification. A leader’s integrity leads to trust; trust generates security; and, security promotes *peace*. A peaceful organization is not always a conflict-free organization, rather it is an organization where conflict is handled with integrity and win-win solutions are pursued.

Intel Vice President, David Marsing, is an excellent example of a manager who understands the relationship between integrity and trust. In the 1980s, Marsing managed the Intel fabrication plant that produced the 386 processor. This eighteen-year-old plant eventually became obsolete and the production operation was relocated. When the plant closing was announced, Marsing made a commitment to find a job for every employee. It took two years and lots of persistence, but eventually all 700 employees were relocated. Marsing's commitment to his word paid off time and time again. Word of his integrity spread and in its wake, incredible loyalty followed him as he assumed new positions in the Intel organization. People who work for him trust him because it is widely known that Marsing "went to the mat" to honor his word.

The day-in-day-out activities of leadership have their peaks and valleys, but the successful leader is one who, throughout these variations in conditions, sustains a high degree of positional consistency. These leaders walk their talk, and in so doing, they establish *trust through positioning*.

### **Confidence through Respect**

Effective leaders develop confidence among their colleagues. This confidence is born in the leader's self-confidence that worthy objectives can and will be achieved. Such confidence is contagious, and in time mutual *love* and respect among leaders and followers grow and flourish. The cycle continues as respect leads to more confidence, and ultimately all organizational members come to believe not only in their own and the organization's worth, but in their ability to meet any challenge. Thus, respect provides the basis for the ability to genuinely appreciate both self and others, and to accomplish the goals which lead to organizational excellence.

Ricardo Semler, CEO of the Semco Corporation in Sao Paulo, Brazil, is a model of compassion and respect. Women who work for Semler speak of how Semco's weekly dialogue groups and annual retreats have helped them transform home lives of repression and abuse. These experiences dramatically increase participants' self-confidence and sense of empowerment, changing them and eventually changing society. Semler describes the Semco culture as "extreme common sense" (Shelton, *Quantum Leaps*, pp. 157–158). People practices include factory-floor flextime, self-set salaries, and a rotating CEO-ship. These organizational practices have created a climate of *confidence through respect*.

Respectful leaders reach out to the people in their organizations. They demonstrate appreciation and caring (Kouzes and Posner, 1999, p. 9). They are open and sensitive to the needs and differences of others and look at relative viewpoints rather than absolutes. They model empathy. Empathetic leaders want others to grow and develop. These leaders see latent

talent and encourage it; they listen and learn from those around them, and they realize that a person's inability to do one job does not mean that that individual is incompetent in all jobs. These leaders have an unusual ability to bring out the best in others by instilling *confidence through respect*. They create a culture characterized by a deep appreciation for differences, thereby modeling unconditional *love*.

## THE QUANTUM SKILLS

The traditional management skills of planning, organizing, directing, and controlling are often incongruent with the values and strategies discussed thus far. These traditional management skills keep leaders stuck in the traditional, mechanistic, modernist worldview. New postmodern models of organization require new leadership skills – skills that can enable leaders to integrate their deepest values into the pursuit of excellence – skills that recognize the roles that language and perception play in the construction of organizational reality.

These new leadership skills are labeled *Quantum Skills* (Shelton, *Quantum Leaps*, pp. 4–6) because they use the paradoxical principles of quantum mechanics as the foundational framework for a new way of thinking about leadership. Quantum mechanics, or quantum physics as it is commonly called, is the physics of the subatomic realm. Quantum concepts offer new images of a world of constant change, a world where order emerges out of chaos, and a world of subjectivity where the intentions of the observer affect that which is observed. The quantum realm is a much better metaphor for 21<sup>st</sup> century organizational life than is the machine metaphor from which the traditional management skills of planning, organizing, directing, and controlling were derived.

The *Quantum Skills* are defined as follows: (1) *Quantum Seeing*: The ability to *see* intentionally. (2) *Quantum Thinking*: The ability to *think* paradoxically. (3) *Quantum Feeling*: The ability to *feel* vitally alive. (4) *Quantum Knowing*: The ability to *know* intuitively. (5) *Quantum Acting*: The ability to *act* responsibly. (6) *Quantum Trusting*: The ability to *trust* life's process. (7) *Quantum Being*: The ability to *be* in relationship. These seven skills are leadership skills in the broadest sense of the word. They are not intended to be practiced solely by the nominal leader, but rather they are to be modeled by that person as a way of widely diffusing these skills throughout the organization. It is hypothesized that as these skills permeate an organization, the probability of excellence will increase.

### Quantum Seeing

The first skill, *Quantum Seeing*, is the ability to see intentionally – as opposed to being a victim of habitual ways of perceiving. Research in human perception suggests that over eighty



percent of what is seen in the external world is a function of internal assumptions and beliefs (Wheatley and Kellner-Rogers, 1996, p. 49). Yet leaders, for the most part, continue to manage their organizations with little regard for the subjective nature of external reality. The word reality is derived from the Latin words for think (*revi*) and thing (*res*). Reality, or at least the individual experience thereof, is directly related to those things that people think about. Zukav (1979, p. 310) summed it up this way:

*Reality is what we take to be true. What we take to be true is what we believe. What we believe is based upon our perceptions. What we perceive depends upon what we look for. What we look for depends on what we think. What we think depends on what we perceive. What we perceive determines what we believe. What we believe determines what we take to be true. What we take to be true is our reality.*

Hence, leaders' beliefs reinforce their perceptions and their perceptions reinforce their beliefs. Consequently, they become trapped in a repetitive cycle, seeing the world as they have always seen it and making their decisions within a relatively narrow band of possibilities, not because opportunities are limited, but because perceptions always are. The implications for organizational visioning are apparent. If innovative, compelling visions are to be generated, leaders must break free of old perceptual constraints.

Unfortunately, it is often difficult to change perceptual habits. They are learned early, and they are controlled primarily at an unconscious level of awareness. However, leaders can learn to become more aware of their intentions and as they learn to change their intentions, their perceptions shift accordingly. Csikszentmihalyi (1990, p. 27) believes that intention is the psychological process from which reality is constructed. Intentions cause people to pay attention to certain stimuli while totally ignoring a plethora of other perceptual possibilities. The skill of *Quantum Seeing* enables leaders to consciously select new intentions, thus expanding their vision of what is possible for themselves and their organizations. Clear intention serves as a magnifying glass, a new lens through which leaders can make new perceptual choices – choices that otherwise would have been missed.

The skill of *Quantum Seeing* also reminds leaders of the importance of involving all stakeholders in the visioning process. If employees are not involved, they are likely to be perceptually incapable of seeing and, hence, of creating new possibilities (Näsi, 1995, pp. 21–24). Instead, they remain committed to their current mindsets, unable to make the perceptual choices required for the execution of successful plans. Therefore, if leaders are to effectively utilize the *attention through vision* strategy, the skill of *Quantum Seeing* must not only be mastered by the leader, it must also be developed at all levels of the organization.

## Quantum Thinking

The second skill, *Quantum Thinking*, is defined as the ability to think paradoxically. Logical, linear thinking skills are proving to be increasingly inadequate in a rapidly changing, digital world. Twenty-first-century organizations are not logical entities and, for that matter, neither is the physical universe. At the subatomic level, the universe is highly illogical and completely paradoxical. The most obvious quantum paradox is that the visible, three-dimensional world, is composed solely of invisible energy. Furthermore, this energy can appear as either wave or particle, depending on how it is observed. To further complicate the issue, quantum energy waves, like water waves, can be superimposed on each other. This gives a subatomic particle the capacity to be both *here* and *there* at the same time – a logical absurdity. Thus, the universe, at its most fundamental level is essentially a paradox.

Organizations are highly paradoxical as well. For example, all leaders have, at one time or another, discovered that *slower is often faster* or that *the way to increase power is to give it away*. Leading a values-based organization frequently puts leaders in paradoxical situations. Each time leaders choose *hope* in the face of discouragement or maintain inner *peace* in the midst of a declining economy, they are modeling the power of paradoxical thinking. In order to think paradoxically, leaders must awaken the capacities of the right hemisphere of the brain – the side of the brain that “thinks” in images not words and is, therefore, free from the constraints of verbal language and logic. The right brain can gather up seemingly unrelated ideas and arrange them into highly creative idea constellations, thus bypassing the left-brain’s propensity for logical thinking (Hayashi, 2001, pp. 61–62). The right brain has another important creative advantage. It can process millions of visual images in microseconds, and solve problems exponentially faster than the clock-bound left hemisphere. Each time a leader chooses to visualize versus think in words, he/she literally disconnects from the linear passage of time. Thus, through the process of imagistic thinking, leaders can escape the tyranny of time and enter a realm where seemingly opposite options can effortlessly superimpose themselves into highly creative solutions.

Many twenty-first century organizational challenges pose questions that simply cannot be answered by logical thinking. For example, how can leaders balance their responsibility to stockholders with responsibility to employees, customers, and the environment? How can short-term operating goals be achieved while sustaining long-term values? Or, how can errors be decreased while improving speed? The ability to think paradoxically will be key to creating highly innovative solutions to these and a myriad of other organizational challenges (Näsi, 1995, pp. 20–21). The skill of *Quantum Thinking* provides an on-going stream of highly innovative, often illogical ideas that help transcend the obstacles to excellence. The ability of an organization to thrive, and perhaps even survive, demands that this skill be widely developed.

## Quantum Feeling

The third skill, *Quantum Feeling*, is the ability to feel vitally alive and fully energized – regardless of external circumstances. Research at the Institute of HeartMath (*IHM Research Update*, 1993, p. 3) suggests that the human heart is a primary source of energy for the mind-body system. The heart generates the strongest electromagnetic signal in the human body and the power of that signal is primarily a function of thoughts and emotions. Positive emotions (e.g., *joy, hope, peace* and *love*) increase coherence, thus increasing energy. Negative emotions (e.g., frustration, fear, anger, conflict, and stress) decrease coherence in the heart’s electromagnetic waves, causing the mind-body system to lose energy.

This research confirms what many individuals already know. Positive emotions energize, and negative emotions exhaust. Knowing this to be true does not, however, solve the pervasive epidemic of stress, conflict and burnout that is common throughout the business world today (Nurmi and Darling, 1997, pp. 157–165). Fast-paced schedules drain energy. Stress-filled jobs exhaust people. Interpersonal differences create conflict. Individuals desire health and vitality; but, too often experience tiredness and disease (Loehr and Schwartz, 2001, pp. 122–126). The skill of *Quantum Feeling* enables leaders to feel good internally, regardless of what happens externally. When leaders utilize this skill, they quite literally change the physics of their bodies by changing the feelings of their hearts (Dyer, 1998, pp. 211–213). They become increasingly aware of the perceptual choice point between an external stimulus and a subsequent internal response; and they begin to recognize that their energy is never depleted by other people or events, but rather by their perceptual choices.

As leaders learn to utilize the skill of *Quantum Feeling*, they spontaneously unleash the organizational vitality required for the unrelenting pursuit of excellence. They discover that organizational reality is constructed by how they choose to see things; thus, validating their decision to focus on and appreciate what is right rather than depleting organizational energy through a problem-focused, negative leadership style. In such an environment, *joy, hope, peace* and *love* abound.

## Quantum Knowing

The fourth skill, *Quantum Knowing*, is the ability to know intuitively. William James used the term “radical empiricism” to describe this process of direct knowing – knowing beyond sensory input (Taylor, 1994, p. 353). Quantum physics sheds new light on the intuitive process. The subatomic realm is basically a set of signals or a field of information. The universe is not filled with energy fields; rather, the physical universe emerges out of an underlying quantum field of information. Energy fields are, in the language of physics, the ground state of all that is. Organizations are embedded in an invisible, seemingly infinite field of information.

It is difficult, yet intriguing, to imagine an organization with leaders who know how to intuitively access this cosmic database – the quantum field of infinite information. Perhaps this is the essence of intuitive knowing – the ability to access information fields that lie beyond sensory perception. There is considerable research (Wade 1996, 14) indicating that human consciousness is a function of interactions between the brain and quantum energy fields. Memory itself appears to involve storage sites outside the brain.

Even though much remains to be validated about human consciousness and the precise nature of intuition, Parikh's research (1994) suggests that many leaders extensively utilize intuitive knowing, though few make their intuitive abilities public and even fewer attempt to propagate and integrate intuitive knowing into daily organizational practices. However, the overwhelming amount of data mandates that leaders explore and experiment with new decision-making processes. There is simply too much information available to process in traditional, analytical ways.

Langer has developed a theory of mindful decision-making (McCarthy, 1994, p. 28). Langer's research suggests that gathering information does not necessarily lead to better decisions. In fact, organizations are typically focused on an impossible goal – reducing uncertainty through data collection. This is futile because even the amount of information that could be gathered about the simplest of decisions, such as developing a new product or selecting a supplier, can involve limitless research. Rather than focusing on gathering information, Langer's theory focuses on staying aware (mindfulness). She points out that a belief in certainty is actually a huge disadvantage. Certainty leads to mindlessness. When leaders are certain, they cease to pay attention. On the other hand, uncertainty keeps leaders attentive both to external conditions and to their internal intuitions.

As leaders practice the skill of *Quantum Knowing*, they begin to intuit just the right words and phrases needed to provide *meaning through communication*. They become masterful communicators, creating authentic learning organizations – organizations in which all ideas are heard and multiple ways of knowing are valued. In such an environment, breakthrough insights are common and intuitive innovations move the organization to ever higher levels of excellence. And, where there is success, *joy* follows and *hope* for a positive future is generated.

## **Quantum Acting**

The fifth skill, *Quantum Acting*, is the ability to act responsibly, demonstrating concern for all people and for the planet. When leaders understand the intricate interconnectedness of the universe, they begin to shift their view of themselves and they begin to recognize the need to create more socially responsible and responsive organizations.

At the subatomic level, when two particles interact, they remain connected, regardless of their separate future locations (the principle of nonseparability). Therefore, what happens to one particle may affect the other particle spontaneously, even across great distances. Gribbin (1984, p. 229) explains the relevance of this principle to human organizations:

*Virtually everything we see and touch and feel is made up of collections of particles that have been involved in interactions with others right back through time, to the Big Bang in which the universe as we know it came into being. The atoms in my body are made of particles that once jostled in close proximity in the cosmic fireball with particles that are now part of a distant star, and particles that form the body of some living creature on some distant, undiscovered planet. Indeed, the particles that make up my body once jostled in close proximity and interacted with the particles that make up your body.*

Everything in the universe is a part of a correlated, complex whole in which each part influences and is influenced by every other part. The skill of *Quantum Acting* enables leaders to practice social responsibility, making decisions that are good for both the organization and the larger society. Each time a leader makes a responsible choice, it affects the future choices of others as well. Thus, organizational excellence is designed one choice at a time. When leaders choose to express *joy, hope, peace* and *love*, they are, in the words of Zohar (1990, p. 184), “loading the quantum dice” and increasing the probability that others inside and outside of the organization will choose to act accordingly.

Each individual person is correlated with every other person, and each decision influences the entire system. Therefore, when leaders model *confidence through respect*, the respect that leaders show to others will be returned to them. In a correlated universe, the more that is given, the more one receives. So-called socially responsible behaviors (e.g., treating all stakeholders respectfully or taking good care of environmental resources) are in actuality merely common sense. As leaders begin to use the skill of *Quantum Acting*, they discover that organizations can, indeed, do well while also doing good.

### **Quantum Trusting**

The sixth skill, *Quantum Trusting*, is the ability to trust life’s process – even when it seems chaotic. Chaos theory provides a new way of viewing the confusion of organizational life. This theory demonstrates that chaos is inherent in the evolutionary process. Chaos is the catalyst that creates the disequilibrium necessary for system evolution. It is the progenitor of all progress. Without chaos life stagnates and entropy ensues (Darling and Fogliasso, 1997, pp. 1–2).

However, not all chaos is regenerative. Passive chaos occurs when a closed system reaches equilibrium and its elements move around in a random fashion, decaying into entropy. Active chaos occurs in an open system that is in a state of disequilibrium. In such a system, environmental feedback serves as a catalyst, disrupting the system and moving that system to higher levels of order and coherence. The system's new direction appears to be the result of chance and uncertainty. However, a growing number of scientists believe that an invisible ordering principle is at work (Prigogine and Stengers, 1984, p. 13; Briggs and Peat, 1989, p. 183; Wheatley, 1992, p. 20).

Chaos theory refers to this invisible ordering principle as a *strange attractor*. Over time even the most chaotic systems never go beyond the boundary of the strange attractor. Strange attractors suggest that we live in a world in which chaos is bounded by inherent order (Briggs and Peat, 1989, p. 183). Bounded chaos is a remarkable paradox. It suggests that leaders function in a universe that is both orderly and chaotic, a world that displays structure without clockwork regularity – potentiality without predictability. Wheatley and Kellner-Rogers (1996, p. 35) reflect on what this might mean for leaders. They write: "If order is for free, we don't have to be the organizers. We don't have to design the world. We don't have to structure existence... Organization wants to happen."

For some, these words are deeply appealing. Many leaders are exhausted from their attempts to predict and control. They suspect that there really is a simpler way. As leaders practice the skill of *Quantum Trusting*, they begin to focus on the mystery of organizations, rather than on mastery over them; they become less intent on manipulating people and more intent on listening to them. This does not mean that excellent leaders sit passively by and watch life happen; rather they set clear intentions, trusting the abilities of all involved. The skill of *Quantum Trusting* enables leaders to more fully develop *trust through positioning*, thereby sustaining *hope* in the midst of chaos and *peace* in the midst of turmoil.

## Quantum Being

The final skill, *Quantum Being*, is the ability to be fully present in relationships. At the subatomic level, matter comes into being only through relationships. Subatomic particles are abstractions. Their properties are definable and observable only through their interactions with other particles. Out of the abstract relationships of subatomic particles, matter emerges. The creation of matter is, therefore, more a function of intimacy than of mastery – of *being* rather than *doing*.

Utilizing the skill of *Quantum Being* in organizations also requires leaders to learn to balance doing with being – intimacy with mastery. Goss comments: "When you alter the way you are *being*, with effectiveness and competence, you gain the capacity to make the impossi-

ble into a reality" (1994, p. 16). It is through relationships that an organization's potential is released. When people approach relationships with unconditional *love*, a new entity is created that is greater than the sum of the two individuals. However, these organizational encounters are not always conflict free. Often they provoke unresolved issues and reopen psychological wounds, thus giving each party the opportunity to learn and heal, or deny and blame. As leaders experience the perceptual transformations that are inherent in loving relationships, they begin to understand that their outer realities reflect their inner beliefs. Relationships are, therefore, psychological mirrors. In them, leaders can see themselves reflected. When faults are observed in another, those observations often mirror the leader's own internal conflicts, providing feedback about unhealed areas of his/her own psyche.

As leaders practice the skill of *Quantum Being*, they begin to recognize that *peace* begins internally. When leaders master this skill, they bring a peaceful mind and a peaceful heart into all their interactions. Eventually they begin to turn their organizational priorities upside down, creating the time and space for dialogue, trusting that improved relationships will translate into improved results. In so doing, they discover that progress is a byproduct of partnership and they put away their outdated paradigms and become authentic change masters, changing themselves and their organizations from the inside out.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The values of *joy, hope, peace, and love* and the supporting strategies of *attention through vision, meaning through communication, trust through positioning, and confidence through respect* are widely appreciated but rarely used. Sustaining these values and strategies is no easy task. Though an analysis of the literature (Peters and Waterman, 1982; Ohmae, 1990; Nurmi and Darling, 1997; Batten, 1989; Snyder, 1994; Peters and Austin, 1985; Bennis and Nanus, 1985; Kouzes and Posner, 1999) suggests a relationship to excellence, these values and strategies often seem to be directly opposed to short-term financial goals and prevailing business practices. Leading a principled, value-driven organization requires character and courage (Covey, 1992, p. 60; Puryear, 2000, pp. 333–342). It also requires the mastery of new skills – *Quantum Skills* that enable leaders to be in their organizations in new ways and with a new understanding of how change happens.

This article builds on, and attempts to make more behaviorally concrete, many of the theoretical constructs discussed by Wheatley (1992) in her ground-breaking work on *Leadership and the New Science*. Its postmodern conceptual framework purports that these leadership values, transformational strategies, and quantum skills can be used to create organizational excellence. Research is certainly needed to better understand the organizational impli-

cations of the postmodern perspective and to test the relationship between this conceptual framework and outcome measures (e.g., profitability, market share, customer/employee satisfaction, or product innovation) of organizational excellence. However, conducting such research presents both practical and theoretical concerns.

From a practical perspective, it is difficult to identify an adequate population of leaders who have done the intensive inner work of self-reinvention. On the theoretical front, such research would be contaminated by the theory's foundational proposition that researchers find only what their language gives them the capacity to observe. Wheatley writes: "Every act of measurement loses more information than it obtains, closing the box irretrievably and forever on other possibilities" (1992, p. 63). Therefore, postmodern philosophy mandates not only the development of new leadership models, but new research methodologies that can assess the robustness of those models while recognizing the postmodern limitations of data collection and analysis. To paraphrase the oft-quoted words of Einstein, it is impossible to assess new theories with the same tools that created the old ones. ■

## REFERENCES

- BATTEN, J.** (1989). *Tough-Minded Leadership*. New York: American Management Association.
- BENNIS, W. and NANUS, B.** (1985). *Leaders: The Strategies for Taking Charge*. New York: Harper & Row.
- BENNIS, W. and BIEDERMAN, P.** (1997). *Organizing Genius*. New York: Addison-Wesley.
- BRIGGS, J. and PEAT, F.D.** (1989). *The Turbulent Mirror: An Illustrated Guide to Chaos Theory and the Science of Wholeness*. New York: Harper and Row.
- CAPRA, F.** (1983). *The Tao of Physics*. Boulder, CO: Shambhala.
- CORNESKY, R., et al.** (1990). *W. Edwards Deming: Improving Quality in Colleges and Universities*. New York: Magna Publications.
- COVEY, S.R.** (1992). *Principle-Centered Leadership*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- CSIKSZENTMIHALYI, M.** (1990). *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*. New York: HarperCollins.
- DARLING, J.** (1999). Organizational excellence and leadership strategies: Principles followed by top multinational executives. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*. 20(6), 309–321.
- DARLING, J. and FOGLIASSO, C.** (1999). Conflict management across cultural boundaries: A case analysis from a multinational bank. *European Business Review*. 99(6), 383–392.
- DARLING, J. and FOGLIASSO, C.** (1997). Conflict management in the small business firm. *Journal of Contemporary Business Issues*. 5(1), 1–11.
- DYER, W.W.** (1998). *Wisdom of the Ages*. New York: Harper–Collins.
- GERGEN, K.G.** (2001). Psychological science in a postmodern context. *American Psychologist*. 56(10), 803–813.
- GITLOW, H. and GITLOW, S.** (1987). *The Deming Guide to Quality and Competitive Position*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Harper Collins.
- GOLDSTEIN, J.** (1994). *The Unshackled Organization*. Portland, OR: Productivity Press.
- GOSS, T.** (1994). *The Last Word on Power*. New York: Doubleday.
- GOSS, T.** (1993). The reinvention roller coaster. *Harvard Business Review*. Nov./Dec., 97–108.
- GRIBBIN, J.** (1984). *In Search of Schroedinger's Cat: Quantum Physics and Reality*. New York: Bantam.



- HAYASHI, A.** (2001). When to trust your gut. *Harvard Business Review*. 79(2), 59–65.
- IHM Research Update** (1993). Boulder Creek, CA: Institute of HeartMath, 1(1).
- JAWORSKI, J.** (1996). *Synchronicity: The Inner Path of Leadership*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.
- KASH, T. and DARLING, J.** (1998). Crisis management: prevention, diagnosis, and intervention. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*. 19(4).
- KELLEY, F. and SPENCER, G.** (2000). *Choose Joy*. Independence, MO: Herald.
- KOUZES, J. and POSNER, B.** (1999). *Encouraging the Heart: A Leader's Guide to Rewarding and Recognizing Others*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- LEMONICK, M.D.** (1995). Glimpses of the mind. *Time*. July 17, 44–52.
- LOEHR, J. and SCHWARTZ, T.** (2001). The making of a corporate athlete. *Harvard Business Review*, 79(1), 120–128.
- MCCARTHY, K.** (1994). Uncertainty is a blessing, not a bane. *APA Monitor*, Sept., 28.
- MCLAGAN, P. and NEL, C.** (1995). *The Age of Participation*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.
- NÄSI, J. (Ed.)**. (1995). *Understanding Stakeholder Thinking*. Jyväskylä, Finland: Gummerus Kirjapaino.
- NURMI, R. and DARLING, J.** (1997). *International Management Leadership: The Primary Competitive Advantage*. New York: International Business Press.
- OHMAE, K.** (1990). *The Borderless World*. New York: Harper Collins.
- O'REILLY, C. and PFEFFER, J.** (2000). *Hidden Value*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- PARIKH, J. (WITH NEUBAUER, F. and LANK, A.)**. (1994). *Intuition: The New Frontier of Management*. Oxford: Blackwell Business.
- PETERS, T. and AUSTIN, N.** (1985). *A Passion for Excellence: The Leadership Difference*. New York: Random House.
- PETERS, T. and WATERMAN, R.** (1982). *In Search of Excellence*. New York: Harper & Row.
- PRIGOGINE, I. and STENGERS, I.** (1984). *Order Out of Chaos*. Boulder, CO: Shambhala.
- PURYEAR, E.** (2000). *American Generalship: Character is Everything, The Art of Command*. San Francisco: Presidio Press.
- ROBBINS, S.P.** (2001). *Organizational Behavior*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- SANDERS, T.I.** (1998). *Strategic Thinking and the New Sciences*. New York: The Free Press.
- SEMLER, R.** (1993). *Maverick: The Story Behind the World's Most Unusual Workplace*. New York: Warner Books.
- SENGE, P.M.** (1990). *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*. New York: Doubleday.
- SHELTON, C.** (1999). If your only tool is a hammer. *Perspectives*, 13(1), 71–82.
- SHELTON, C.** (1999). *Quantum Leaps*. Boston: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- SNYDER, C.** (1994). *The Psychology of Hope: You Can Get There From Here*. New York: The Free Press.
- SRIVASTVA, S. and COOPERRIDER, D.** (1999). *Appreciative Management and Leadership*. Euclid, OH: Williams Custom Publishing.
- STACEY, R.D.** (1996). *Complexity and Creativity in Organizations*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.
- STACK, J.** (1992). *The Great Game of Business*. New York: Doubleday.
- TAYLOR, E.** (1994). Radical empiricism and the conduct of research. In W. Harmon and J. Clark (Eds.), *New Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Science* (345–373). Sausalito, CA: Institute of Noetic Sciences.
- TOMASKO, R.** (1993). *Rethinking the Corporation*. New York: American Management Association.
- WADE, J.** (1996). *Changes of Mind: A Holonomic Theory of the Evolution of Consciousness*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- WALKER, W.E.** (1986). *Changing Organizational Culture*. Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press.
- WHEATLEY, M.J.** (1992). *Leadership and the New Science*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.
- WHEATLEY, M.J. and KELLNER-ROGERS, M.** (1996). *A Simpler Way*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.

- WOLF, F.A.** (1989). *Taking the Quantum Leap*. New York: Harper and Row.
- ZOHAR, D.** (1997). *ReWiring the Corporate Brain*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.
- ZOHAR, D.** (1990). *The Quantum Self: Human Nature and Consciousness Defined by the New Physics*. New York: William Morrow.
- ZUKAV, G.** (1979). *The Dancing Wu Li Masters: An Overview of the New Physics*. New York: Bantam.

Leadership in an organization involves getting followers to work together in a coordinated effort to achieve the same goals. Conflict is an inevitable part of organizational life. Blake and Mouton distinguished styles of conflict management along the two dimensions of their grid theory: concern for people and concern for task. Withdrawal is a style characterized by low concern for task and low concern for people in which individuals psychologically and physically removes them from the situation. Organizational excellence is defined as the achievement earned by an organization of consistently superior performance. Learn more at ASQ.org. An organization is a group aggregated and combined under specific leadership to function as a single entity for a particular purpose. Excellence is a measure of consistently superior performance that surpasses requirements and expectations without demonstrating significant flaws or waste. Organizational excellence continues the progress established by a foundation such as total quality management, in which all levels of the organization participate in continual improvement. Organizational excellence model and framework. Organizational leadership emphasizes on developing leadership skills and abilities that are relevant across the organizations. An ideal organizational leader should not dominate over others. He should guide the individuals under him, give them a sense of direction to achieve organizational goals successfully and should act responsibly. He should be optimistic for sure. He should be empathetic and should understand the need of the group members. An organizational leader should not only lead others individually but also manage the actions of the group. Individuals who are highly ambitious, have high energy level, an urge to lead, self-confidence, intelligence, have thorough knowledge of job, are honest and flexible are Principles form the foundation for organizational excellence and characterize the culture and values of the organization and depict the way people work together and with their stakeholders. Lean is a work process improvement methodology that focuses on the elimination of waste (e.g., transportation, inventory, motion, waiting, overproduction, overprocessing, defects) within an organization to improve overall customer value. Organizational excellence refers to the use of best management practices common to high-performing organizations that, when successfully implemented, contribute to a Four transformational leadership strategies and seven quantum skills are introduced. These values, strategies and skills can enable twenty-first century leaders to create new levels of organizational excellence by harnessing the most powerful energy in the universe the energy of the Mind. CHARLOTTE D. SHELTON, Assistant Professor Helzberg School of Management Rockhurst University Kansas City, Missouri e-mail: [email protected] JOHN R. DARLING, Distinguished Professor Helzberg School of Management Rockhurst University