Lightning Rod!
A leader’s guide to becoming a positive conduit for group energy

Thursday June 16 3:15 - 4:15

Our passion is helping our clients to grow healthy & innovative organizations
Learning Assumptions

1. You are here to learn. Learning requires reflection as much as new information. This session is an opportunity to reflect together.

2. There is (at least) ‘one thing’ you will take away. It is up to you to discover what that is!

3. We believe you are here because you are a leader.

Learning in the 21st Century

“Education is what people do to you. Learning is what you do to yourself. Focus on being connected, always learning, fully aware and super present.”

~Joi Ito, Director of MIT Media Lab

Source of 70/20/10: Centre for Creative Leadership & Adult Learning Practices
Content Objectives

Objective 1:
• Collectively explore new leadership metaphors together.

Objective 2:
• Introduce a tool that can support you in becoming a conduit of group energy (AIR Framework).
“We look at the world through a lens, which we call VUCA, which stands for “Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous.” So you can say, “It’s a very tough world”, or you can say, “It’s a world that’s changing fast, and we can help consumers navigate through it.”

Source: Keith Weed, Unilever Chief Marketing and Communication Officer during an interview with Forbes Magazine.

What’s changed? Navigating the whitewater world

“...learn how to read the context, and to be able to respond immediately and read through what’s happening beneath the surface from the signals on top of the surface. You are living in a whitewater world...”

~John Seely Brown
Discovery

What is the first word that pops into your mind when you hear the word ‘Leader’?

Tripping over old programming

We have old leadership programming that is impeding our ability to lead in the whitewater world.

“Most ailing organizations or teams have developed a functional blindness to their own defects. They are not suffering because they cannot resolve their problems but because they cannot see their problems. The leader cannot see the connections.”

~ John Gardner, Author
70% of Change Projects are Unsuccessful

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Change Process Success

2008 was the same as 1995

No change in results.

Source: The Inconvenient Truth of Change Management—Why it isn’t working and what to do about it. McKinsey article by Scott Keller and Carolyn Aiken

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From change **DRIVEN** through:

- Hierarchy
- One way communication - ‘Tell’ the Future Story
- Motivate with Burning Platform Metaphor (Fear)
- Cascading down
- Leaders focus on others changing
- Trial and Error (blame frame)

**Impact:**

- Stagnation
- Declining engagement
- Rise in mental health issues
- Lost potential
To change **FUELED** through:

- Networks
- Co-create the future story
- Motivate with Burning Ambition (Purpose/passion)
- Whole system engagement
- Leaders focus on changing themselves
- Trial and Learning (growth frame)
- Interactive communication

**Impact:**

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The solution: Deep knowing

“The starting point is to recognize what outdated leadership styles we are clinging to. We still rely too much on the scientific management method and the heroic leader. This mold must be broken.”

~Rosie Steeves, Breaking the Leadership Mold.
Competing commitment

“Even as they hold a sincere commitment to change, many people are unwittingly applying productive energy toward a competing commitment. The resulting dynamic stalls the effort in what looks like resistance but is in fact a kind of personal immunity to change.”

~ Robert Kegan and Lisa Laskow Lahey


Let’s discuss moving:

From:
The ‘great one’; heroic; command-and-control; autocratic

To:
Exploring ‘Grounded leadership’. Positive conduit for group energy
Topic: A lightning rod:

1. **Channels powerful energy** when needed
2. Patiently waits, providing a sense of **presence and security**
3. Is **dependable** and not easily corroded by external pressures
4. Remains **invisible** - frequently taken for granted

AIR Framework

- **Appreciating & learning from the PAST**
  - Intentionally taking the best of the past, and drawing it into the present.
- **Reflecting and taking action in the PRESENT**
  - Finding the most energizing and effective ways to move into the future.
- **Imagining an ideal FUTURE**
  - Discovering the novel, inspiring future.
Exploring high-risk times when you were ‘grounded’

Think of a time when you took a risk. This might be a time when you had an interaction you’d been worried about but had a good outcome, or a decision you made that was uncertain and risky at the time, but in retrospect was highly valuable.

Tell your partner of the story surrounding that risk.
• What insight or value did you gain from this risk?
• What contributed to the positive outcome?
• What helped you ‘stay the course’ through this risk?

Key ingredients to being grounded

Based on the stories you just told, what would you say are the key ingredients of being a grounded leader?

Find 2-3 key ingredients, put them on Post-it notes, prepare to share.
I - Imagine Yourself a Year from Now and You are Grounded

What is it is that you would be doing or saying or being to demonstrate that you are grounded.

R - What is one thing you will do now, that will help you be a more grounded leader?
“Our world’s bright future will be built by people who have discovered that leadership is the enabling art. It is the art of releasing human talent and potential.” ~Stephen R. Covey

My role, particularly in recent years, has more often than not been that of a facilitator or an enabler.

~Richard Branson