

INTEGRATIVE LEADERSHIP INTERNATIONAL

“Helping individuals and organizations become integrated.”

Lessons on the Path:

March 4, 2005 Volume 1, No. 26

“The Tao of Leadership”

Richard John Hatala

OBSERVATION:

In preparation for our talk on the “Tao of Integrative Life & Leadership” at the Tao of Peace Martial Arts Studio in Calgary on March 12th, we reviewed our research on the Tao and its impact on western perspectives of life, learning and leadership.

Taoist philosophy is believed to be over 3,000 years old. The crystallization of Taoist thought into the written word occurred in the 6th Century B.C. by Lao Tzu in a text called the *Tao Teh Ching* (“The Universal Integral Way of Life”). Lao Tzu was a contemporary of Confucius during the warring states (475-221 BC) period of Chinese History. In that time of intense turmoil, separation and change—not unlike our present day—each philosopher sought to bring peace, harmony and order from the chaos of their day. Their approaches to help bring balance back to the people, however, were very different.

The Confucian path believed in social order, hierarchy and the importance of honouring and maintaining external relationships, whereas Lao Tzu advocated walking the inner path that led one to an authentic experience of the Tao and the natural character that would emerge as result of that inner experience.

Later, with the introduction of Buddhism to China about 600 AD, these three schools of thought became the philosophical foundations influencing China today. In the west, elements of Taoist thought can be found in the concept of yin and yang (duality), acupuncture (influencing energy flow in the body), Feng Shui (geomancy) and the practice of Tai Chi (integration).

Johnson, in his “Emerging Perspectives in Leadership Ethics” (2000) believes that Taoist principles provide an ancient framework for recent western leadership trends that include empowerment, teamwork, collaboration, servant leadership, spirituality in the workplace and the need for organizational innovation and original inspiration. Johnson feels that the Taoist leader: (1) Exerts minimal influence in the lives of followers; (2) Encourages followers to take ownership of tasks; (3) Employs soft tactics (persuasion, empowerment, modeling, teamwork, collaboration); (4) Rejects the use of violence; (5) Demonstrates creativity and flexibility; (6) Promotes harmony with nature and others; (7) Lives simply and humbly; (8) Rejects the trappings of status and promotes equality; (9) Recognizes the underlying spiritual dimension of reality.

Dreher in her “Tao of Personal Leadership” further suggests that Taoism is the path to both personal and professional development. In her words: “...in following the Tao, western leaders experience a sense of inner peace and balance that is missing in much of Corporate America.”

In our examination of Taoist philosophy, we found resonance with Integrative Leadership between the four domains as elements of metal (physical), water (emotional), air (mental) and wood (spiritual) and the transformative fire held in the heart as an integrating Tai Chi. We also found correlations between the three levels of awareness as the Tai Ching (mechanistic), Shan Ching (organic) and Su Ching (wholistic) paradigms. And just as we observed, and continue to observe, transformative changes for those embarking on the process of integrative life and leadership, Autrey & Mitchell suggest in “Real Power” observing transformative changes for those embarking on the path of the Tao:

“The more you embody these teachings; the more the scattered parts of your life fall into place and become a seamless whole; work seems effortless; your heart opens by itself to all the people in your life; you have time for everything worthwhile; your mind becomes empty, transparent, serene; you embrace sorrow as much as joy,



*Man follows the ways of the Earth.
The Earth follows the ways of Heaven.
Heaven follows the ways of Tao,
Tao follows its own ways.*

Lao Tzu, *Tao Teh Ching*

failure as much as success; you unthinkingly act with integrity and compassion; and you find that you have come to trust life completely.”

From our perspective, 21st Century leaders will need to combine the external philosophies of Confucianism (doing) with the internal principles of Taoism (being) so that they can become one within an awakened heart, which is in our view, the deeper meaning that is the Tao of Integrative Leadership.

APPLICATION: Choose one of the ten Taoist ideas from John Heider’s “Tao of Leadership” shown below in Information and apply it in your life this week. If you are having difficulty in picking just one, we would suggest that you begin an experience of the Tao by applying this one: *The Beginning, the Middle and the End*. Once an event is fully energized and formed, stand back as much as possible. Pay attention to the natural unfolding of events. Don't do too much. Don't be too helpful. And see what could result in a project you initiate this week.

INSPIRATION: “The ancient leaders who followed the Tao did not give people elaborate strategies, but held to a simple practice. It is hard to lead when we try to be too clever. Too much cleverness undermines group harmony. Those who lead without such strategies bring blessings to all. To know these principles is to follow the Tao.” **Lao-Tzu, Tao, 65.** “As for the best leaders, the people do not notice their existence. The next best the people honour and praise; the next the people fear; and the next the people hate...when the best leader’s work is done, the people say ‘we did it ourselves.’ So to lead people, you must walk behind them.” **Lao Tzu, Tao 17.** **On the Yin and Yang of Life, Learning & Leadership:** “Where there is possibility, there is impossibility, and when there is impossibility, there is possibility . . . The 'this' is also the 'that.' The 'that' is also the 'this.' . . . Is there really a distinction between 'this' and 'that'? . . . When 'this' and 'that' have no opposites, there is the very axis of the Tao.” **Chuang Tzu.**

INFORMATION: For the most resonant translation of the two works attributed to Lao Tzu, see **Hua-Ching Ni.** (1979). *The Complete works of Lao Tzu: Tao Teh Ching & Hua Hu Ching*. Seven Star Communications Group, Inc: Los Angeles, CA. **Autry, J.A. & S. Mitchell.** (1998). *Real Power: Business Lessons from the Tao Te Ching*. New York: Riverhead Books. **Herman, S. M.** (1994). *The Tao at Work: On Leading and Following*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. **Messing, B.** (1992) *The Tao of Management*. Bantam Books: New York. **Craig E. Johnson** (1999) “*Emerging Perspectives in Leadership Ethics*”. 1999 Annual Meeting International Leadership Association, Academy of Leadership Press, 2000. **John Heider.** (1986). *The Tao of Leadership: Lao Tzu’s Tao Te Ching Adapted for a New Age.* Humanics New Age: Atlanta, GA. Some thoughts around the Tao Te Ching’s 81 verses as they apply to life and leadership from **Heider:** (1) *Be Open to Whatever Emerges.* The wise leader does not impose a personal agenda or value system on the group. (2) *The Paradox of Letting Go.* When I let go of what I am, I become what I might be. When I let go of what I have, I receive what I need. (3) *Unbiased Leadership.* Can you remain open and receptive no matter what issues arise? Can you know what is emerging, yet keep your peace while others discover it for themselves? (4) *Soft and Strong.* Water is fluid, soft and yielding. But water will wear away rock, which is rigid and cannot yield. (5) *The Creative Process.* The wise leader knows about pairs of opposites and their interactions. In order to lead, the leader knows how to follow. (6) *Inner Resources.* To know how other people behave takes intelligence, but to myself takes wisdom. (7) *Knowing What is Happening.* When you cannot see what is happening in a group, do not stare harder. Relax and look gently with your inner eye. (8) *Tao is Universal.* All power and effectiveness come from following the law of creation. There is no substitute for knowing how things happen and for acting accordingly. (9) *Unclutter Your Mind.* Learn to unclutter your mind and simplify your work. (10) *The Beginning, the Middle and the End.* Once an event is fully energized and formed, stand back as much as possible. Pay attention to the natural unfolding of events. Don't do too much. Don't be too helpful. **Diane Dreher.** (1997). *The Tao of Personal Leadership*. HarperBusiness: New York. An extract from Dreher’s work: “We are in the midst of what some have called 'a major turning point in history.' As we face recurrent waves of technological, social and political change, many of us are searching for a new source of hope to guide us through these tumultuous times. Twenty-five centuries ago in ancient China, during another period of change and upheaval, two contrasting philosophies arose. During the breakdown of the Chou Dynasty, Confucius constructed a

philosophy of moral order, emphasizing duty, manners, ceremony and respect for family and authority. It is not surprising that Confucianism was readily adopted by China's feudal lords who appreciated its strong emphasis on duty and obedience. In contrast to Confucius's elaborate rituals and rigid social order, his contemporary Lao-Tzu upheld the dynamic philosophy of Taoism. Walking through the woods and observing the lessons in mountain stream, grove of bamboo, or the changing seasons, Lao Tzu drew inspiration from the world around him. Watching the natural cycles, he realized that nature cannot be forced or controlled and that nothing in the universe stands still. His philosophy embraces change as the very essence of life. While more traditional *Confucian* leaders find their security in the social hierarchy around them, *Taoist* leaders find their security within them, affirming strength of character as they navigate life's shifting currents. In contrast to the modern books on leadership that focus on power plays, one-minute solutions, clever strategies and game plans, the Tao Te Ching affirms personal leadership, the enduring power of character..."

UPCOMING PUBLIC PROGRAMS:

March 5 2005: Integrative Leadership: Book Signing: **Time:** 2:00 to 3:00 pm. **Location:** McNally Robinson Booksellers, 3130-8th Street East, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. For information, call Deneen at (306) 955-3599. This is an opportunity to speak with the authors on integrating life, learning and leadership.

March 9-11 2005: Integrative Leadership: Taking Leadership to the Next Level: Sponsor: University of Saskatchewan, Business and Leadership Programs. Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. **Tuition:** \$895.00 per person. **Topic:** Experiencing the path of integrative life and leadership. To download a brochure and registration form, **Click this link:** http://www.integrativeleadership.ca/programs/uofs_march05.pdf. For more information, call (306) 966-5492 or visit the U of S website at www.learntolead.usask.ca.

March 12 2005: 2:00 to 3:00 pm: **"The Yoga of Integrative Life & Leadership"**. **Where:** Yoga Studio North, 211, 5403 Crowchild Trail N.W., Calgary, AB, Canada T3B-4Z1. **Tuition:** Free. **Topic:** Rick and Lillas Hatala will outline the Yogic philosophy, principles and practices in relationship to living integrative life and leadership. **For more information:** contact Val or Michelle at (403) 286-6161. To download a poster of the event, **CLICK HERE**.

March 12 2005: 3:30 to 4:30 pm: **"The Tao of Integrative Life & Leadership"**. **Where:** The Tao of Peace Martial Arts Studio, 5403 Crowchild Trail N.W., Calgary, AB, Canada T3A-4Z1. **Tuition:** Free. **Topic:** Rick and Lillas Hatala will outline the Taoist philosophy, principles and practices in relationship to living integrative life and leadership. **For more information:** contact Chris Leigh-Smith at (403) 288-0000. To download a poster of the event, **CLICK HERE**.

March 17-19 2005: Integrative Leadership: Taking Leadership to the Next Level: Sponsor: Grant MacEwan College, Downtown Campus, 612-10050 MacDonald Drive, Edmonton, AB. **Tuition:** \$895.00 per person. **Topic:** Experiencing the path of integrative life and leadership. To download a brochure and registration form: **Click this link:** http://www.integrativeleadership.ca/programs/edmonton_march05.pdf. For more information, call Wade Bendfeld at (780) 423-6223, **Toll Free** at (888) 497-4622 or visit the Grant MacEwan College Corporate Learning website at: www.macewan.ca/business/ce.

April 14-16 2005: Integrative Leadership: Taking Leadership to the Next Level: Sponsor: Integrative Leadership International. **Location:** *Inn on Crowchild*, 5353 Crowchild Trail NW, Calgary, AB, Canada. **Tuition:** \$895.00 per person. **Topic:** Experiencing the path of integrative life and leadership. To download a brochure and registration form: **Click this link:** - http://www.integrativeleadership.ca/programs/calgary_april05.pdf. For more information, visit the I.L.I. website at www.integrativeleadership.ca.

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