

INTEGRATIVE LEADERSHIP INTERNATIONAL

“Helping individuals and organizations become integrated.”

Lessons on the Path:

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“On Building Trust”

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OBSERVATION:

This week I attended the third annual True North Leadership Summit (www.truenorthleadership.org) in our city that featured two speakers: Sherron Watkins and

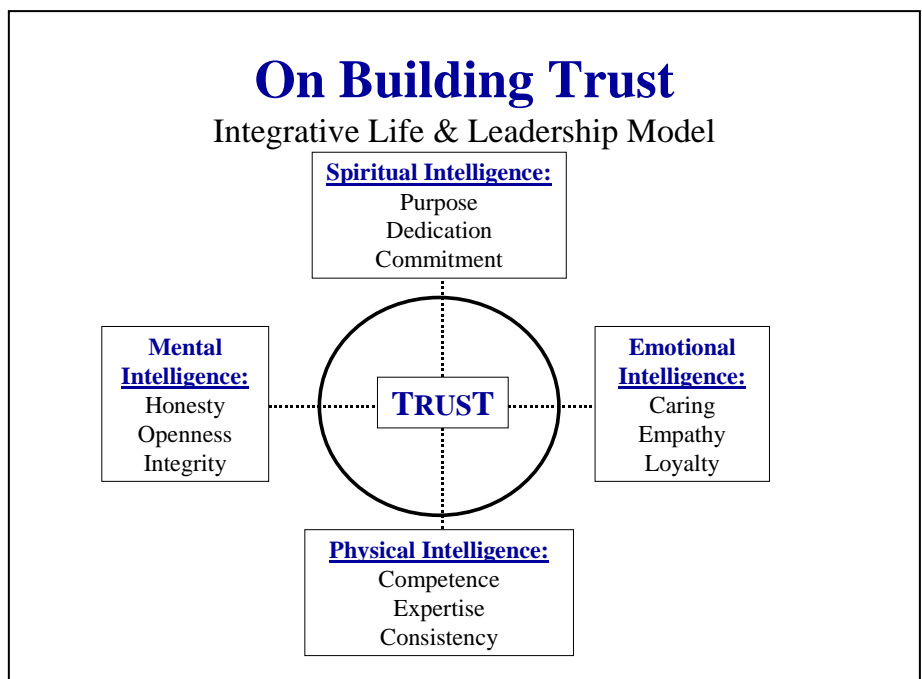
Patrick Lencioni. Sherron is a former Vice President of Enron and the woman who alerted CEO Ken Lay to accounting irregularities in the company shortly before the company imploded in 2001. Later, she co-authored the book, “Power Failure: The Inside Story of the Collapse of Enron”. Patrick Lencioni, CEO of the Table Group, who wrote several best-selling books including “The Five Dysfunctions of a Team” and “Death by Meeting”, gave an exceptional morning presentation at the Summit.

During his presentation, Patrick suggested that average teams who were committed to a common purpose could outperform other teams—even those populated by superstars—because these other teams often acted as a collection of individual contributors without a common purpose. He felt that high performing teams were built by a willingness of each team member to sacrifice and often suffer for one another for a cause or purpose that was bigger than each member’s own self-interest.

In the process of consulting to senior management and executives in the past twenty years, Lencioni identified five dysfunctions of a team. These were, beginning at the base (*see figure above*): (1) Absence of Trust; (2) Fear of Conflict; (3) Lack of Commitment; (4) Avoidance of Accountability; and (5) Inattention to Results.

In my post session reflections, I agreed with Patrick that the foundation and essential element of our relationship with our Ideal, ourselves and others is trust: giving it, building it, loosing it or rebirthing it.

Trust is defined as relying on the principles or qualities of a person or thing such as justice, compassion, integrity, and truth. Psychologists suggest that trust is a complex outcome of many factors and its cultivation is felt to be more an *art of the heart* than a *science of the head*. Trust is built by consistently modeling and demonstrating our beliefs, ideals, principles and standards. One observation about trust is that it takes a long time and many interactions to build it; and little time, and often one bad choice, to erode or destroy it.



Covello identified four pairs of factors that help to build trust such as honesty and openness, caring and empathy, dedication and commitment, competence and expertise. We related his eight factors plus four of our own to our model of Integrative Life & Leadership shown in the figure “On Building Trust”. Demonstration of these positive factors builds trust whereas modeling their opposites such as dishonesty, being closed, and lack of integrity helps to diminish and eventually destroy it.

Lencioni’s five dysfunctions of a team can be related to the five progressively degenerative stages of walking off the path of integration. These five stages of devolution are: (1) **Avoidance**: where we avoid people or situations that evoke in us strong negative emotional reactions; (2) **Suppression**: where if the relationship is unavoidable, we consciously suppress our true thoughts and feelings about that relationship; (3) **Compromise**: where if we inadvertently express our true thoughts and feelings with that other, their often negative reaction causes us to experience more fear, worry, guilt and shame about the potential loss of that relationship; (4) **Repression**; where each time one finds themselves in a compromising situation they would like to avoid or suppress, the habit of conscious suppression becomes in time, unconscious repression; and finally (5) **Abdication** of personal responsibility and accountability for all our life decisions and the consequences that naturally flow from them. In this fifth stage we find ourselves blaming others, the team, system, corporation, organization or government for all that is wrong with our life, in the process rendering ourselves powerless.

Lencioni suggested that the way to build trust in a team was to first become *vulnerable*. From an integrative perspective, we would translate this to mean to become *real* with others and ourselves by risking sharing our private histories, thoughts, feelings and intentions with those others rather than simply our public image or persona.

When Sherron Watkins spoke, she opened her afternoon session by suggesting that the culture within Enron was one that was the embodiment of Lencioni’s five dysfunctions. Rather than building a culture of trust, Enron had successfully built in its corporate history, a culture of mistrust. And although in 2001 it was rated as the seventh largest corporation in the world, it was the lack of trust that ultimately led to its demise.

What level of trust (*low, medium, high*) do you have with yourself, your intimate relationships, your family, team, organization or community? Are you living, working and continuing to build a culture of trust or mistrust? For we have found that if you mistrust others, than you also mistrust yourself and the Ideal you could, in time and patience, become. By consciously choosing to *build trust* in all your relations, you will lay down the foundation on which you can begin to integratively rebuild your life from the inside out.

APPLICATION: Reflect this week on your degree of trust in yourself, your relations and your associations this week. Do you keep your word, or do you often break it? Do you honour your commitments to yourself and others or do you dishonour them? Do you publicly practice radical honesty and share your thoughts, feelings, observations and intentions with others, or do you keep them as you have in the past, private? Do you practice care and compassion for others, or do you avoid them? Do you accept full responsibility and accountability for your decisions and their consequences, or do you blame others, circumstances and situations for your perceived mistakes and failures? Do you commit to a higher purpose or ideal, or do you seek self-interest above the common good and interest of others?

INSPIRATION: “A person who trusts no one can’t be trusted.” **Jerome Blattner**. “Love all, trust a few, do wrong to none.” **William Shakespeare**. “Self-trust is the first secret of success.” **Ralph Waldo Emerson**. “It is better to suffer wrong than to do it, and happier to be sometimes cheated than not to trust”. **Samuel Johnson**. “I have no fear that the result of our experiment will be that men may be trusted to govern themselves without a master”. **Thomas Jefferson**. We are not afraid to entrust the American people with unpleasant facts, foreign ideas, alien philosophies, and competitive values. For a nation that is afraid to let its people judge the truth and falsehood in an open market is a nation that is afraid of its people. **John F. Kennedy**. “The leaders who work most effectively, it seems to me, never say “I.” And that’s not because they have trained themselves not to say “I.” They don’t think “I.” They think “we”; they think, “team.” They understand their job to be to make the team function. They accept responsibility and don’t sidestep it, but “we” gets the credit.... This is what creates trust, what enables you to get the task done.” **Peter Drucker**. “Health, contentment and trust are your greatest possessions. And freedom your greatest joy.” **Buddha**. “In God we Trust”. **Motto on American Dollar Bill**.

INFORMATION: Lencioni, Patrick. (2002). *“The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable”*. John Wiley & Sons: Toronto. Watkins, Sherron & Swartz, Mimi. (2003) *“Power Failure, the Inside Story of the Collapse of Enron.”* Doubleday: New York, NY. Covello, V.T. et al, Eds. (1989). *“Effective Risk Communications.”* Plenum: New York, NY. For an overview on trust see: www.coping.org/growth/trust.htm by James J. Messina, PhD and Constance M. Messina, PhD. They are at jjmess@tampabay.rr.com.

UPCOMING PUBLIC PROGRAMS:

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 under upcoming events.

June 6 2005: 7:30 to 9:30 pm: **Integrative Leadership: Pathway to Potential: Sponsor:** Centre for Spirituality at Work, Box 100, 162 Spruce Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5A-2J5; **Location:** To be announced, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. **Tuition:** \$30.00 per person. **Topic:** Exploring the process of integration as a path towards developing more of our human potential. **Click this link:** http://www.integrativeleadership.ca/programs/Centre_Spirituality_Work_June6.pdf for more information on the evening program; **Registration:** Contact Sherry Connolly at **Phone:** (416) 482-9175, **Fax:** (416) 482-9969, **E-Mail:** info@spiritualityatwork.org or **Website:** www.spiritualityatwork.org.

June 14-16, 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_june_2005.pdf For more information, call (306) 966-5492 or visit the U of S website at www.learnolead.usask.ca under upcoming events.

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