

# INTEGRATIVE LEADERSHIP INTERNATIONAL

“Helping individuals and organizations become integrated.”

## Lessons on the Path:

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### “Spinning a Yawn”

Richard John Hatala

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#### OBSERVATION:

Communication is a skill and talent that is both art and science. Psychologists who have studied verbal communication have shown that 7% is associated with the words that we use to convey our message and 93% is associated with everything else. The ‘everything else’, they speculate, involves not only what we say, but also how we choose to say it: our body language, tone of voice, and our choice of words and images that illustrate the message we desire to convey. But these primarily physically based factors do not fully explain why we can easily understand one person and completely misunderstand another. On reflecting on our own experience, questions arise such as:

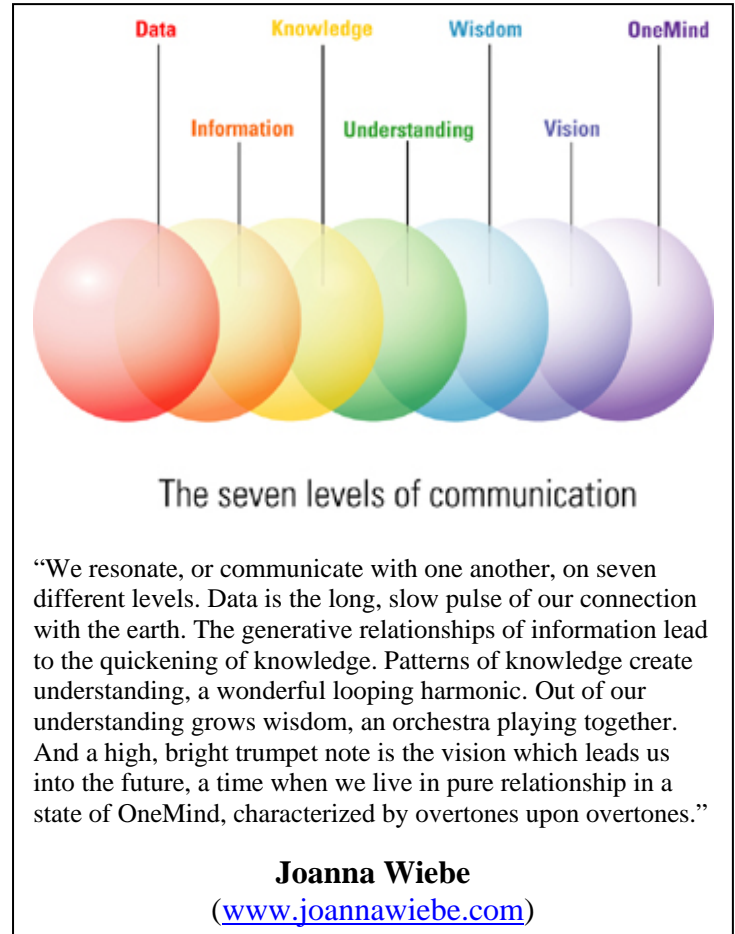
Have you ever been in a conversation with someone and they used a wrong word and you correctly corrected them? How did you know what they meant over what they said? Have you ever met someone that you liked or disliked even before they spoke? Why did you feel that way? Have you sat in a crowded restaurant and simply knew someone was looking at you? And when you turned around they were?

To search for answers to these communication questions, researchers are drawing on the principle of resonance (either harmonious or destructive)—found in the hard sciences of physics, chemistry and biology—and applying it to the softer science of human relations and communications.

For example, in a recent Globe & Mail item that summarized research from the NeuroImage Journal on yawning: “Brain scans of volunteers exposed to yawning have established that it is contagious and a ‘synchronized group activity’ in the same way that herds of animals and flocks of birds all take flight at the same time. It had long been thought that copycat yawning was simply imitation, but neuroimaging research...shows that the areas of the brain involved with mimicry were not activated.” If a simple human act such as yawning is contagious, what are researchers finding concerning feeling, meaning and intent?

According to Adrian Nagata: “The vibrations of emotion that pass between people nonverbally are described by Hatfield, Cacioppo, and Rapson in *Emotional Contagion* as *automatic affective resonance*. The phenomenon of emotional resonance is what such colloquial expressions as *being on the same wavelength* or *getting bad vibes* refer to. Understanding how quickly and wordlessly state of being, especially its emotional aspect, is conveyed and how comparatively much greater effort is required to reach verbal understanding is crucial for developing effective interpersonal and public communication skills.”

Adrian goes on to suggest that true communication first begins with ourselves as a set of practices that cultivate what she calls, *bodymindfulness*. As we become more somatically aware of ourselves, we can begin to align and integrate the science and the art of communication so that the sharing of our integrative life and



leadership tales can become as easy and effective as *spinning a yawn...*

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**APPLICATION:** Conveying data, information and knowledge we would associate with the mechanistic paradigm: understanding with the organic paradigm: and wisdom and vision with the wholistic paradigm (*see Wiebe's figure on the seven levels of communication above*). Observe this week when and with whom did you feel completely organically understood and on the same wavelength, and when and with whom did you feel it was difficult to communicate and be understood? Where were you in terms of state of body, mind and heart when you were attuned to your message and that other and where were you when you felt disconnected? In this way you can begin to be aware of the relationship between your own mechanistic bodymindfulness on the one hand, and organic thoughtfulness and empathy for the other on the other.

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**INSPIRATION:** "But what is resonance, really? Resonance means the quality of sounding again. To resonate is to reverberate. Reverberation implies give and take, the definition of communication, which is always simultaneous, and between at least two agents. Any communication implies an exchange of information" **Jose Arguelles**. "To describe the age in which we live, I believe we should use Simone Weil's Greek term *metaxu*, translated as 'resonant communication'. Resonance entails response, interaction, co-creation, a space between." **Stephanie Strickland**. "...for effective interpersonal and public communication, it is important to recognize the phenomenon of resonant emotional communication between bodyminds; the direct communication of the state of being that is felt when people first encounter each other whether or not any words are spoken. This immediate impression that people receive of each other is what I mean by the term *energetic presence*." **Adrian L. Nagata**.

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**INFORMATION:** Globe & Mail Newspaper: Page A18, February 23 2005; Article: "Have a Yawn". Joanna Wiebe. (2004). Fear and Growth: Various outlines and thoughts on her book in progress can be found at [www.joannawiebe.com](http://www.joannawiebe.com). Hatfield, E., Cacioppo, J. T., & Rapson, R. L. (1994). *Emotional contagion*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press. Nagata, A. L. (2000, Spring). Resonant connections. *ReVision* 22(4) 24-30.

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#### **UPCOMING PUBLIC PROGRAMS:**

**June 6 2005:** 7:30 to 9:30 pm: **Integrative Leadership: Putting it all Together: 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](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](mailto:info@spiritualityatwork.org) or **Website:** [www.spiritualityatwork.org](http://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:** \$958.00 per person (includes GST). **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](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.learnlead.usask.ca](http://www.learnlead.usask.ca) under upcoming events.

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