

INTEGRATIVE LEADERSHIP INTERNATIONAL

“Helping individuals and organizations become integrated.”

Lessons on the Path:

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“Clarifying Your Leadership”

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OBSERVATION:

Last week, after many coaching sessions, I sat and reflected on the work of Gervase Bushe who wrote, several years ago, a book entitled *Clear Leadership*. Bushe suggests a different perspective on conversations and suggests that clear communication is at the heart of effective leadership.

Bushe begins by asking several questions: “Do you want to work in an organization where you can tell the truth of your experience? Do you want people to tell you the truth? Do you want to work in an organization where you are clear where you stand, clear where other people stand, and able to learn from your experiences together?”

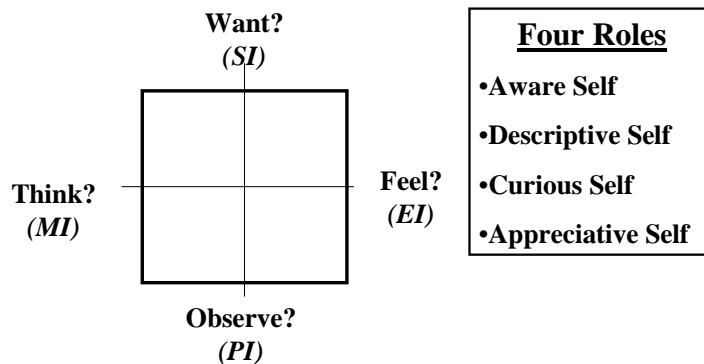
Bushe wrote *Clear Leadership* to help teach interpersonal skills to people who were ignorant about them and wallowing in a state he terms, *interpersonal mush*. The reason why we are ignorant, according to Bushe, is because no one role modeled or taught us how to take Bushe’s basic attitudes and intentions and turn them into effective ways of working with and managing other people. It is these skills of clear communication that he observes exceptional leaders, clear leaders, using every day.

Traditional command and control organizations are built to be able to operate in spite of the interpersonal mush. An empowered organization that relies on people to take personal initiative and collaborate cannot. Gervase calls the new organizations, “empowered” to recognize that the wider dispersion of power is a core difference between them and bureaucratic organizations.

The basis for understanding how to work well with people consists of two core realities of the human mind. One is that we are perception-generating beings whose *precepts*, or the building blocks of perception, come from two sources; internal and external stimuli. *Internal stimuli* originate from past memories, beliefs (mental maps), values, tradition, culture and biochemistry, whereas *external stimuli* originate from the five senses. The precepts, blended from all internal and external, conscious and unconscious sources combine together to form our perception of an event or situation. The other is that we are sense-making beings (we make up stories). When you fully grasp what this means and the implications of these ideas separately and together, you are on the road to understanding *why people do what they do* and therefore *to being able to influence* their actions and perceptions meaningfully. This is the basis of great leadership that involves “Knowing Thyself” and “Knowing Others”.

Bushe also distinguishes between objective truths, which can be measured (science and technology) and subjective truth, which cannot be measured (such as what someone says they think, feel or want out of a situation). His third truth is inter-subjective where we agree on our shared truth, like the level of quality, definition of success, or how much customer service do we give as a group, team or organization.

Integrative Leadership Model & Four Roles of *Clear Leadership*



The skills of clear leadership, which works for anyone in any role or position, are self-awareness, descriptiveness, curiosity and appreciation. We all have some skill level in all four areas. Bushe describes what the mastery of those four roles looks like and suggests: "When you master something, you embody it".

The *Aware Self* knows, moment-to-moment, what she is thinking feeling, observing and wanting (the building blocks of experience). She understands the processes she uses to create her experience. She is clear how much of her experience is based on facts and how much is her sense making. The *Descriptive Self* is able to help other people empathize with him. He can describe confrontational aspects of his experience in a way that doesn't make others defensive, but elicits a willingness to listen and understand. The *Curious Self* is a master at getting other people to be descriptive. She is able to observe, question and probe until she fully understands, as much as humanly possible, another person's experience. Others feel comfortable telling her the truth of their experience. The *Appreciative Self* works through imagination and conversation to find the best in people and processes. He is able to see what he wants more of and already exists, even if just in small ways, which he then works to amplify and strengthen.

Practicing and embodying as habits the clear leadership skills creates a foundation for effective decision-making and continuous learning in organizations.

The personal attribute that underlies a person's ability to use clear leadership and create an atmosphere that supports others using these skills is her level of *differentiation* (as opposed to *fusion* with the other on one extreme of the continuum and *disconnection* on the other). A person acts in a differentiated way when she is able to be separate from and simultaneously connected to (a paradox) other people.

Clear leadership is about creating clarity in every interaction and every group you are a member of. It requires understanding the nature of experience and the reasons it seems so difficult to get people to tell the truth of their experience to each other. Once understood, the barriers can be removed and extraordinary results could be achieved, personally, interpersonally and organizationally by clarifying your life and leadership.

APPLICATION: Try out the four roles of clear leadership that Bushe suggests in one or more of your communications this week by asking yourself and that other (*see figure above*): What did you observe or experience? What did you think about it? How did you feel about it? What did you want going in to the situation and now, on reflection afterwards, what is it that you want? In this way you can begin to engage the four domains of intelligence in each external communication you experiment with this week.

INSPIRATION: "During periods of relaxation after concentrated intellectual activity, the intuitive mind seems to take over, and can produce the sudden clarifying insights which give so much *joy* and *delight*." **Fritjof Capra.** "And the other way we give of ourselves is through how we receive another person's message. To receive it empathically, connecting with what's alive in them, making no judgment. Just to hear what is alive in the other person and what they would like. So Non-violent Communication is just a manifestation of what I understand love to be." **Marshall Rosenberg.** "Clarity with compassion, wisdom with passion, intention with action are the essence of integrative communication" **Richard John & Lillas Marie Hatala.**

INFORMATION: Bushe, Gervase. (2001). *Clear Leadership: How outstanding leaders make themselves understood, cut through the mush, and help everyone get real at work.* Davies-Black Publishing, Consulting Psychologists Press Inc, Palo Alta CA, USA. Rosenberg, Marshall. (1999). *Non-Violent Communication.* Puddledancer Press: New York: NY. Moreah Vestan, a student of Rosenberg's non-violent communication model which, like Bushe's model, also consists of four elements: Observation, Feeling, Need and Request (OFNR)) suggests an example of someone being 30 minutes late for a meeting with you. "You may want to yell and insult and be righteous, but if you want a connection, it'd be aided better by OFNR. "When I see that you're here 30 minutes later than you said you'd be (Observation--just facts, no judgment), I feel sad/ hurt/ angry/ disappointed--whatever is true that is not a judgment--because I need respect and consideration and getting there on time. Would you please call me when you are going to be late." (Request that is specific). What communication model do you currently use in your life and work? Is it clear or confusing?

UPCOMING PUBLIC PROGRAMS:

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 For more information, call (306) 966-5492 or visit the U of S website at www.learntolead.usask.ca under upcoming events.

Integrative Leadership: Taking Leadership to the Next Level: Sponsor: University of Saskatchewan: **Tuition:** \$958.00 per person. **Visit:** www.learntolead.usask.ca for details: **In Saskatoon:** November 8-10 2005: February 8-10 2006: June 14-16 2005. **In Calgary:** November 30-December 2, 2005: April 5-7 2006.

Executive Integrative Leadership: From Good to Great and Great to Grace: Sponsor: University of Saskatchewan, Business & Leadership Programs. **Tuition:** \$5,000 (+ GST, Meals, Accommodation). **Topic:** This retreat is an invitation to Senior Leaders, Executives and Managers desiring to experience the path of integrative leadership in depth and in action. **Locations:** Canmore, AB, Canada: March 20-25 2006 **AND** Toronto, Ontario, Canada: November 6-10 2006. For more information and qualifying registration, call (306) 966-5492.

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