

Intervening into Personal and Organisational Systems by Powerfully Leading and Wisely Managing

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Abstract

Originally written from the perspective of a practising executive coach, and as a retrospective on the work of W. Edwards Deming, this essay describes just what it is that a few extraordinary Manager /Leaders seem to possess that enables them to simultaneously Manage *and* Lead **transformation** – first of themselves and then of their organisations. The essay culminates in a comparison of “conventional” organisations, and “post-conventional” (Learning) organisations like Toyota in which Deming’s influence continues to be profound – using 3 generic intervention modes, and 7 archetypal action-logics, each of which corresponds to an executive’s developmental stage.

The essay starts by describing an on-going personal inquiry into the tension between the processes of Managing and Leading – and how this may be leveraged as the basis for systemic intervention. It explains how the most efficacious Leader/ Manager (“**managerial leader**”) possesses heightened awareness of several specific sources of power – that can be picked-up at staging posts along Life’s journey, and explains how a “**learning organisation**” like Toyota can continue to deliver remarkable reliability year after year, decade after decade.

Though originally written 10 years ago, and with the Deming community in mind, the essay has a distinct relevance to the modern day NHS. The Francis Inquiry into the unexpected deaths at Mid Staffordshire Hospital, and the Berwick Review into patient safety – both published in 2013 – illustrate the urgent need for integrating management and leadership as one whole system of action. Don Berwick incidentally uses several Deming idioms in his report.

The essay was first presented in February 2005 at the Deming Research Institute – Annual Research Seminar – Fordham University Graduate Business School, New York City. Within a couple of years’ the need for an integrated model offering distinct choices/ modes of action for managerial leaders (M/Ls) became increasingly apparent to me. So, I set about creating such a model, one that would work as well for conventional M/Ls as much as post-conventional ones; balancing the level of change needed with the level of risk that is politically tolerable, and all framed by the paradigm-shifts that typically characterise these two developmental epochs.

(370 words)

Keywords

Leading; Managing; Deming; Shewhart; Berwick; Ackoff; Scoltes; Quality; System; Transformation; Developmental; Conventional; Post-conventional; Evolutionary Organisational Development; Learning Organisation;

Leading or Managing?

As an employee in the middle of an organisational system in the 80s and early 90s, my job title was Manager, but often I felt that I should be leading. It was a frustration because at that time it seemed that whenever I took the lead to try to change something it would get me in trouble with someone; usually a higher-up. Then I discovered Deming. I had been sent by my organisation to Business School to study for a part-time executive MBA, but I did not discover him there. Oddly, it was through a member of my local community who had been sent by his company to a total quality management (TQM) seminar. One day when passing my house he stopped and buttonholed me with the words “Julian, you are doing an MBA, tell me about Deming and Juran”. Whereupon I was forced to admit: I had not heard of either. Embarrassed that he knew something I did not, I got hold of a copy of *Out of the Crisis* (5), and read it – all night in fact, because once started I could not put it down.

The things that hit me about Deming’s view of the world was that it was a complete and coherent theory of the organisation, and one that patently worked. It was about people and process in equal measure and it reminded me that managing was as important as leading, something at that time that I was in denial about. The book encouraged me that transformation was possible, but only with *appropriate* leadership – which had to be rooted in good management. I also felt that here was someone actually urging me to lead, and when I read the words “*the job of a leader is to accomplish transformation of his organisation*” (6) I felt he was speaking directly to me.

In recent years the demand for leaders, *rather than* for managers, has grown considerably, and at times, it has even been a put-down to describe people in organisations as *merely* managers. Indeed organisations that were downsizing in the 90s were infamous for expunging managers and keeping only those individuals who can lead – the “movers & shakers” who can *make things happen*.

In 1995, C.K Prahalad was so keenly advocating the reinvention of our organisations that he referred to managers as merely caretakers and undertakers: “*The process of re-examining and reinventing the company demands a capacity to think long term and, at the same time, create the financial and the organisational space for change through efficiencies. It is the appetite for this process of re-examining and reinventing that will separate the builders (leaders) from the caretakers and the undertakers (managers and cautious administrators)*” (11).

Moving and shaking were apt words for my own style in the early 90s. As I saw things, I was prepared to challenge the caretakers and undertakers when others were simply too cowardly. I would be the one who put my head above the parapet, and I did feel on occasions that I had made some difference; but I also got myself fired. It was as a redundant executive that I turned to consultancy.

One of the very first work assignments I was approached about was with the Body Shop. I was delighted to think I would be able to witness first hand a brilliantly, even ethically led organisation. What I discovered was production workers and managers who were embarrassed at filling landfill sites with product that was

being needlessly manufactured. One even told me that the word “process” was banned from use by the company’s executives, Another that executives frequently disrupted meetings by overloading them with new ideas. In the 90s it was popular to bemoan the dearth of leadership and of real leaders in organisational life, and yet here was an organisation that showed distinct signs of being over-led, and under-managed.

Nowadays, as a volunteer patient representative in the UK I notice that the NHS too has a particular liking for the notion of *clinical leadership*, with clinical management warranting hardly a mention.

At a British Deming Association seminar in 1994, Peter Scholtes gave me a wonderful insight: He proposed leadership itself to be a process or system. I went away and thought long about this proposition, and eventually came to the conclusion that managing and leading are indeed two distinct processes/systems; two separate ways of intervening albeit with the same ultimate intent. Namely to improve a section of one’s organisation, even in time the whole organisation – maybe even to transform it.

I realised that it was actually unhelpful to think of people in organisations as either managers or leaders; and that everyone, almost every day, is engaged in both managing and leading. It was then I discovered the work of John Kotter who was helpfully confirming that “*leadership and management are two distinctive and complementary systems of action*” and that “*leadership complements management, it does not replace it.*” He also proposed that “*strong managers produce predictability and order, but leaders create, communicate and implement visions of the future which enable companies to change themselves in an ever changing competitive marketplace*” (10) so even Kotter was persisting with the notion that managing and leading are *roles* – stopping short of seeing them as processes or systems.

Gradually, I have come to see that *everyone*, arguably from the moment of birth, but certainly by the time that speech has been acquired and cognitive/ social processes have begun, is interested in doing these two things:

- (a) Make things change/happen, **and**
- (b) Maintain a level of comfort based upon some aspects of life being ordered and stable/predictable, as a base for being able to do (a) make things change/happen.

These are separate processes, although overlapping ones. The first is *Leading*, the second is *Managing*. Albeit this particular definition of leadership is one that is better understood and used by individuals in the more “conventional” stages of developmental maturity which, I hasten to add, is not intended as invitation to be **unconventional**.

Developing the POWER to intervene

Around this time, Deming’s “*The New Economics*” (TNE) (6) appeared, and I was fascinated by how he was describing Leadership. He was saying that “*a system cannot understand itself*” and that “*the transformation will require leaders.*” He went on to say.. “*the first step is transformation of the individual*” which “*comes from understanding the System of Profound Knowledge*”. He also proposed that the individual’s power derives from three sources: **position, influence and knowledge**. In other words, power *over* others, power *with* others, and power *through* mastery.

Just after the TNE was published, Nelson Mandela was being inaugurated as president of the new South Africa, and as if in the zeitgeist, he was reported as urging people to use their personal power: “*Our deepest*

fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. We are all meant to shine, as children do. It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone. And, as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we're liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others." (21)

Another book was published at this time, and this was the one that put it all together for me. Bill Torbert in "*Personal & Organisational Transformations – the true challenge of continual quality improvement*" (15) was suggesting that individuals acquire a succession of new worldviews as they develop throughout their lifetime, and that with each worldview they develop a particular type of power. As I read about each successive worldview, each a coherent self-contained way of making sense of the world – then reflecting autobiographically – I was able to recognise my own (sometimes uneasily painful) transitions.

I believe that, from his own life experience, Deming had an intuitive sense of these sequential transitions, and the coherent completeness of each one, and of course the inherent limitations. He often referred for example to Euclidian geometry and that in its own "flat-earth" world it has integrity, making perfect sense. When consulting he seemed to be able to use his intuitive understanding of where people were at, to ask developmental questions. He asked shop floor workers what they took pride in; he asked executives what they were trying to accomplish; and he sometimes coerced people with ultimatums.

I believe that Deming would not have been surprised by Jim Collins' research findings (1) published in 2001 on the quantum difference that "post-conventionally" thinking leaders make.

On the following page is a table using Bill Torbert's labels to summarize the essence of each worldview (stage):

NOTE: a few months after writing the original essay, a summary description of the stages appeared in the Harvard Business Review (19).

Much more recently (2014) a 2 minute clip on YouTube of Bill Torbert's collaborator David Rooke explaining the model has appeared in: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ThzngWNgRIQ>

Epoch	Stage	Action Logic	Main focus	Source of Power	% of adult pop n = 4,510
POST-CONVENTIONAL	<i>Alchemist</i>	deep processes and inter-systemic evolution rule principles	interplay of awareness, thought, action, and effects; transforming self and others	SHAMANISTIC (through presence)	2.0
	<i>Strategist</i>	most valuable principles rule relativism	linking theory and principles with practice, dynamic systems interactions	INTEGRATIVE (consciously transformative)	4.9
	<i>Individualist</i>	relativism rules single system logic	self in relationship to system, and interaction with system	CONFRONTING used to deconstruct other's frames or world views	11.3
CONVENTIONAL	<i>Achiever</i>	system effectiveness rules craft logic	delivery of results, effectiveness, goals, success within system	COORDINATING (coordinating the previous 3 sources of power)	29.7
	<i>Expert</i>	craft logic rules norms	expertise, procedure and efficiency	LOGISTICAL e.g. knowledge-based or authoritative power	36.5
	<i>Diplomat</i>	norms rule needs	socially expected behaviour, approval	DIPLOMATIC e.g. persuasive power, peer power	11.3
	<i>Opportunist</i>	needs rule impulses	own immediate needs, opportunities, self-protection	COERCIVE (unilaterally) e.g. executive authority	4.3

adapted from Susanne R. Cook-Greuter (2) and Torbert & Fisher (15)

So what about Deming's own personal development? My guess is that by the late 1930's (since he was born in 1900 this was also his late 30s) he was becoming a "post-conventional" being; moving from Achiever to Individualist. When reading his 1950 speech on Mount Hakone to Japan's 30 or so top Industrial Leaders, I

hear a “Strategist” speaking. After being re-discovered in the early 80’s he was probably coming from Alchemist (or an even later frame). I have heard stories about the darkness of some of the music he was composing in his sixties, and I am guessing that these works reflected the metaphorical black hole that a person transitioning from Strategist to Alchemist can feel.

At this point in my essay the reader may feel in need of some background on the principles of development theory?

Some Principles of Development Theory

(adapted from Susanne Cook-Grueter (2))

Development theory describes the unfolding of human potential towards deeper understanding, wisdom and effectiveness in the world. It provides a way of understanding how people tend to interpret events, and how they are likely to act in many common and uncommon situations.

Development occurs through the interplay between person and environment, not just by one or the other. It is a potential that can be encouraged and facilitated by appropriate support and challenge e.g. practicing “Action Inquiry” with others, more of which later. Growth occurs in a logical sequence of stages or expanding world-views from birth to adulthood and the journey is often likened to an ever-widening spiral (20). Development in its deepest meaning refers to transformations of consciousness, perspectives, paradigms, worldviews, and mental models.

As Piaget observed when studying children, once a new level of organisation, knowledge and insight proves to be effective, it will quickly be generalized to other areas. As a result, transitions between stages tend to be rapid and radical, and the bulk of the time spent in a new stage consists of refining this new cognitive level.

A person’s worldview/frame/stage of development influences what they notice or can become aware of; and therefore what they can describe, articulate, influence, and change. Although a person may use several perspectives in a day, we tend to prefer to respond spontaneously with the most complex meaning-making system, perspective, or mental model we have mastered. This preferred perspective is called a person's "centre of gravity" or their "central meaning-making tendency."

It is important to distinguish between lateral and vertical development. Both are important, but they occur at different rates. Lateral growth and expansion (within a stage) happens through many channels, such as schooling, training, self-directed and life-long learning as well as simply through exposure to life. However, when the knowledge that has been gained at one stage of study and experience leads rapidly and radically to a new higher stage of insight, a kind of "gestalt" occurs. It is because this process takes this dialectical form, in which each new stage is created through the further differentiation, integration, and synthesis of new structures out of the old, that the sequence of cognitive stages are logically necessary rather than simply empirically correct.

Each new stage emerges only because the child or adult can take for granted the achievements of its predecessors, and then the possibility of yet more sophisticated forms of knowledge and action is established. Such vertical development occurs when we learn to see the world through new eyes, when we change our interpretations of experience and when we transform our views of reality. Vertical development describes shifts in what we are aware of, and what we can pay attention to, and therefore how we can lead and what

we can manage, as well as what we can influence and integrate.

As an action-logic each stage or frame determines what you see. Stephen Covey (4) reminds us of the importance of understanding paradigms because: what you see → is what you do → is what you get → is what you see, and so on, ad infinitum. Deming too knew about the importance of paradigms and that they are simultaneously both limiting and liberating. “*Plane Euclidean geometry served the world well for a flat earth... every theorem is correct in its own world*” (6). He also knew that each new paradigm is eventually supplanted by a successive, more complex paradigm. I now believe that if he were alive today he would be fascinated by the work of Torbert, Beck, Wilber, Cooke-Greuter and others in understanding the archetypal evolution of paradigms, and the integral link between personal and organisational development.

A person who has reached a later stage can understand earlier paradigms/worldviews, but a person at an earlier stage cannot understand later ones. Without intervention individuals naturally transition every few years until their vertical development halts. The process of shift between stages is usually accompanied by significant discomfort and disorientation. Consequently, the newly birthing stage is initially denied and sometimes may even be rejected. Breakthrough feels very much like breakdown as the current stage dies. As Torbert reminds us, all adults have experienced the anguish of puberty, the transformation from childhood/adolescence into adulthood – and having made it through, few of us would want to repeat the experience.

Later stages are reached only by journeying through the earlier stages. Once a stage has been traversed, it remains a part of a person’s response repertoire, even when more complex, later stages are adopted. Each later stage includes and transcends the previous ones, the earlier perspectives remaining part of our current experience and knowledge (just as when a child learns to run, it doesn't stop being able to walk). Although following transition it may feel as if the previous stage has died (and indeed may be fiercely denied/ rejected when seen in others). Once safely through, it feels to most like they have grown a new skin, and that previous stages are now nested inside – like a set of Russian Dolls. During transition there is also a kind of rejection process in play – as the old world view no longer seems to fit the current environmental need. Likewise, if the rejection process is preventing the birth of the new world view the person can feel stuck or arrested. The battle often continues for several months, maybe for more than a year. Sometimes of course the rejection process wins, the new stage being still-born.

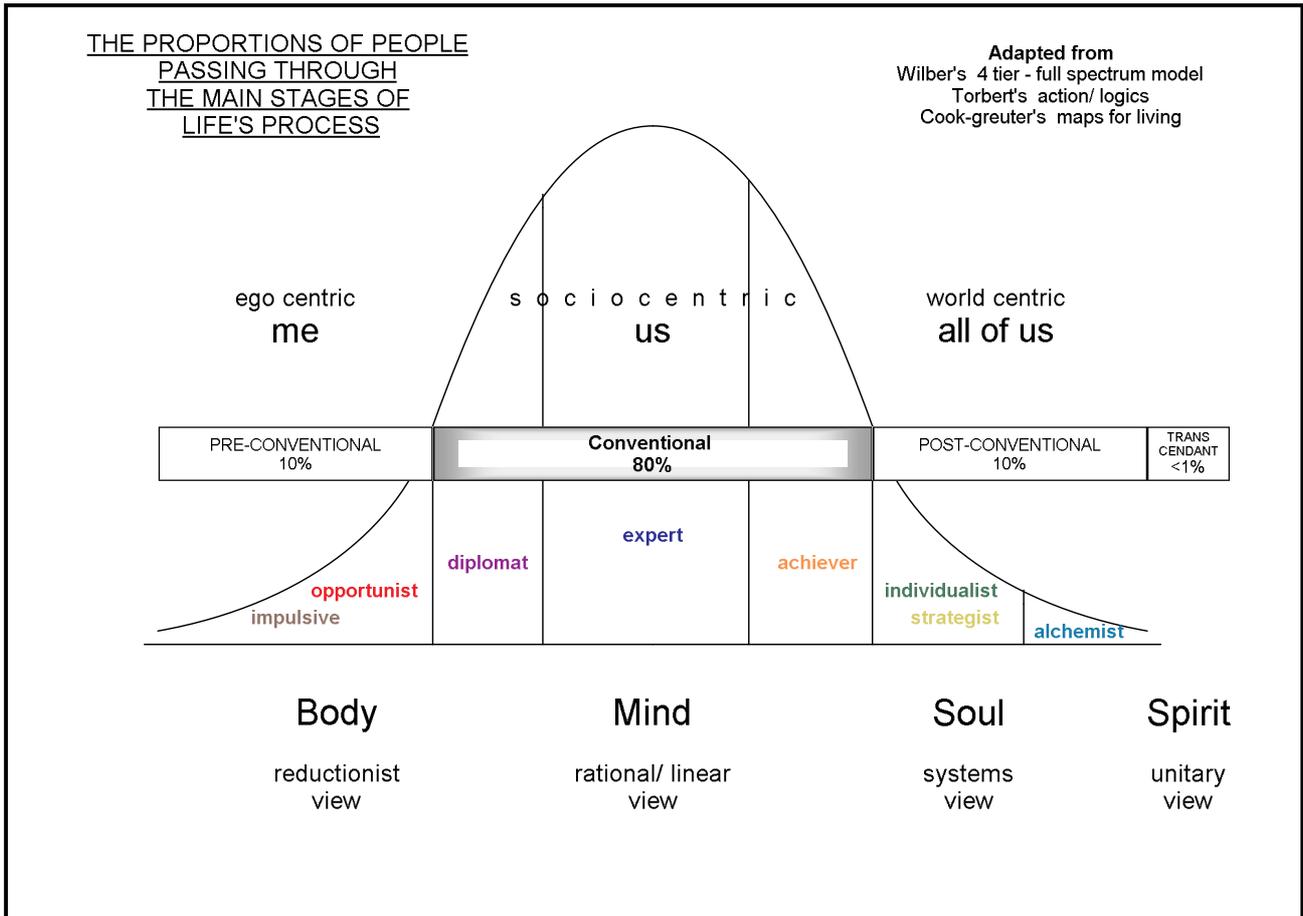
Later stages are not necessarily better than earlier ones. Organisations need people at all stages, in the right numbers. Elliott Jaques emphasized this in his work on requisite organisations (8). Moreover, whatever one’s stage, the model says little about competence or mastery.

There is evidence that even a single competent late-stage person, holding a high-leverage position in an organisation, can make all the difference in terms of an organisation’s development (12).

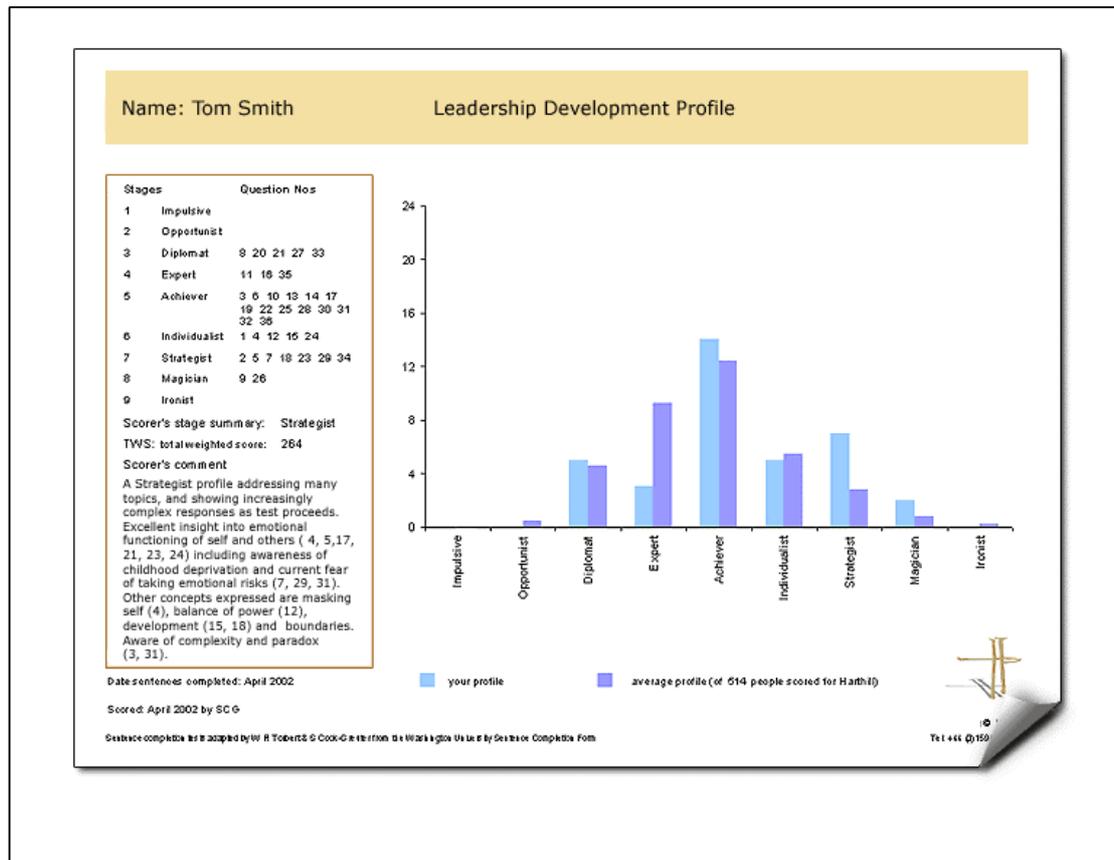
Because acquisition of knowledge is part of horizontal growth, learning *about* developmental theory is usually not sufficient to help people to transition. Only specific long-term practices, self-reflection, action inquiry, dialogue with a post-conventional coach, or interacting with others further along on the developmental path has been shown to be effective. Organisational context obviously has a bearing too.

The depth, complexity, and scope of how individuals make sense of their environment, can expand throughout life. Yet no matter how evolved we each become, our knowledge and understanding is never more than partial and incomplete. In general, one’s worldview/ paradigms evolve from simple to complex, from static to dynamic, and from egocentric to socio-centric, then to world-centric. The stages are sometimes clustered as pre-conventional (Impulsive/ Opportunist), conventional (Diplomat/ Expert/ Achiever) and post-conventional (Individualist/ Strategist, Alchemist +). With regard to these three (I call them) “epochs” the proportions typically found in a whole population are illustrated below.

(adapted from 3)



Following on from Piaget’s ground-breaking work on the developmental stages of children in the 40s and 50s, others (notably Loevinger, Kohlberg, Graves) researched adult development. And then in 1970 Loevinger & Wessler created the first measurement instrument to assess an adults' stage. Their instrument: The Washington University Sentence Completion Test is now one of the best validated in the field of personality assessment – it has been used in thousands of research projects worldwide. The Harthill Group in conjunction with Susanne Cook-Greuter have further developed it – calling it the “Leadership Development Profile”. Here is a sample histogram illustrating how the individual is scored over a range of stages. It is this version that I have used as a diagnostic with some of the M/Ls I have coached – typically with the ones I intuitively sense to be in transition.



The seven stage LDF model is an empirical model (2,3) that's been empirically researched over several decades. But the Deming fraternity will of course need no reminder that all models are wrong, and that only some are useful. I urge readers to try it for themselves. As a coach and change facilitator, all I can do is vouch for its huge usefulness to me – especially when co-facilitating with colleagues who have access to the same language and ways of making developmental sense of their life – both inside and outside of work.

As development unfolds, autonomy, freedom, tolerance for difference and ambiguity, as well as flexibility, reflection and skill in interacting with the environment, increase – and one's influencing capability likewise increases. At the same time, defensiveness (e.g. when receiving feedback) will decrease. The following table illustrates the kind of transitions that one might typically expect from stage to stage.

	Understanding and response to Feedback	Methods of Influence
Alchemist	Views feedback (loops) as a natural part of living systems, essential for learning and change, but takes it with a grain of salt	Reframes, turns inside-out, upside-down, clowning, holding up mirror to society, often behind the scenes
Strategist	Invites feedback for self-actualization, conflict is seen as an inevitable aspect of viable and multiple relationships	Leads in reframing, reinterpreting situation so that decisions support overall principle, strategy, integrity and foresight
Individualist	Welcomes feedback as necessary for self-knowledge and to uncover hidden aspects of their own behaviour	Adapts (ignores) rules where needed, or invents new ones, discusses issues and airs differences
Achiever	Accepts feedback, especially if it helps them to achieve their goals and to improve	Provides logical argument, data, experience, makes task/ goal-oriented contractual agreements
Expert	Takes feedback personally, defends own position, dismisses feedback from those who are not seen as experts in the same field (general manager)	Gives personal attention to detail and seeks perfection, argues own position and dismisses others' concerns
Diplomat	Receives feedback as disapproval, or as a reminder of norms	Enforces existing social norms, encourages, cajoles, requires conformity with protocol to get others to follow
Opportunist	Reacts to feedback as an attack or threat	Takes matters into own hands, coerces, wins fight

Susanne Cooke-Greuter (2)

Note: I am using colours borrowed from “*Spiral Dynamics*” (20) which with one exception – the order of opportunist/diplomat – mirrors the LDF model.

Systemic intervention through Action Inquiry

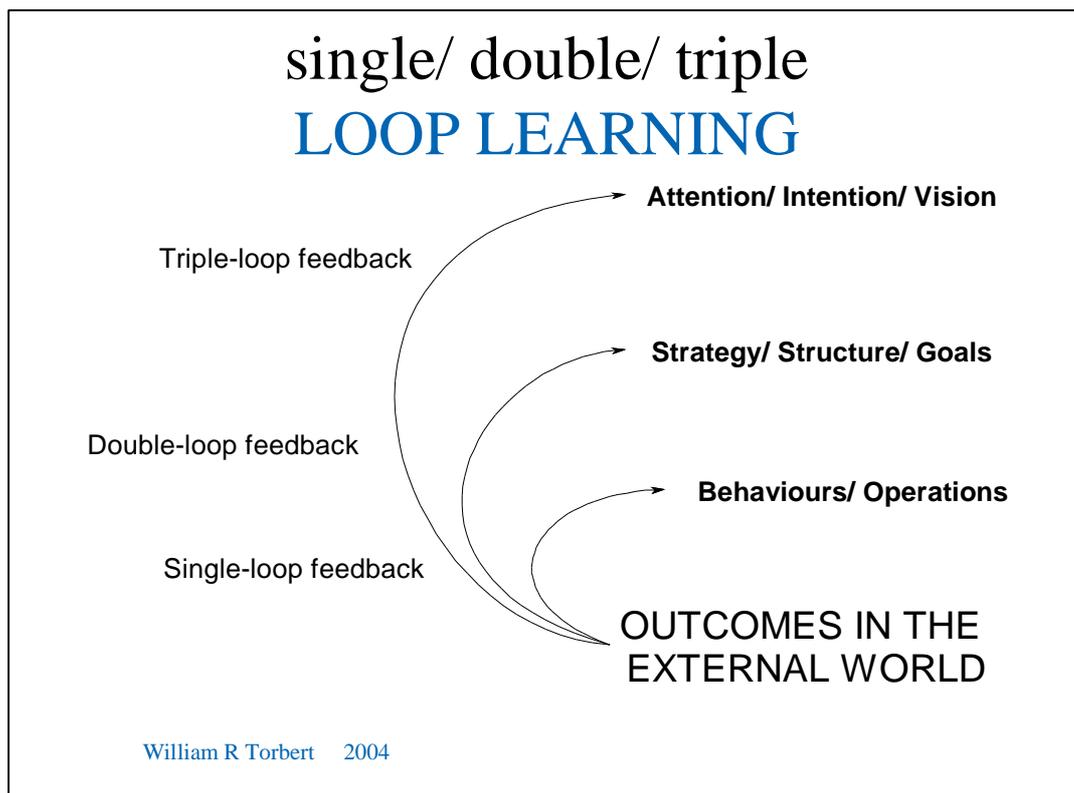
Why is an understanding of the theory of personal development so important for facilitating organisational development?

Bill Torbert is advocating a wider use of the practice of “**action inquiry**” – a kind of behaviour that is simultaneously productive and self-assessing, such that in a developing situation several perspectives become possible simultaneously. It invites, not just task prioritisation, but also if necessary a re-visioning of the task (and of our own action). “*Action inquiry is always a timely discipline to exercise because its purpose is always in part to discover, whether coldly and precisely or warmly and stumblingly, what action is timely*” (16).

You might say, “Well that’s obvious! When don’t you want to act in a timely fashion?” However, action inquiry is the hardest thing in the world to do continually. The difficulty arises partly because of the unusual degree of awareness of the present situation that high quality action inquiry requires. There are also the many different and potentially conflicting political pressures and standards of timeliness that may be at play in a given situation. What makes it especially tough is that it is so very hard to develop a taste for making ourselves vulnerable to change at the *very* moment when we are also trying to get something done or make something happen (16).

An Achiever will usually accept feedback, especially if it helps them to achieve their goals and to improve, but not until the Individualist stage does a M/L *welcome* behavioural feedback, and only at the strategist stage would a M/L actually *invite* feedback in a way that is mutually enhancing. To accept this kind of “**double-loop**” feedback can feel to those in more conventional frames like they are losing their very identity.

A Strategist or Alchemist can feel open to a deeper spiritual presence, or super-vision, which is not based on a self-image, but rather on experiencing the exchange occurring among four territories of experience: their *attention*, their *strategies*, their *actions*, and their *outcomes*. In systems theory, this is called **triple-loop feedback** because, as shown below it highlights the present relationship between our effects in the outside world and our action, together with our strategies and our very attention.



Triple-loop feedback enables leader/ managers to be present to themselves in the moment. Such capability becomes a perennial norm only in the post-conventional epoch. The ability to interweave research and practice in the present, to interweave subjective, intersubjective, and objective data: subjective data about our own intent for the future, intersubjective data about what is going on at present from the divergent points of view of different participants, and objective data about what is actually being produced and at what level of quality. People in such a late stage of development are most often concerned to create an environment pervaded by action-inquiry in the interests of system-wide effectiveness, integrity, mutuality

and sustainability. They have evolved such that they may *choose* to be dedicated to living-out a mutually agreed intent, a shared vision – and to be continually alert to the tensions between vision, strategy, structure, and operational outcomes.

In inviting such multi-dimensional feedback, the post-conventional M/L invites self-transformation, and in so doing invites transformation of their organisation – or at least, depending on their sphere of influence, the part of it they are directly in charge of. They would also be able to choose with agility, moment to moment, the most effective action/logic.

Managing & Leading with transformational intent

Moment to moment, how shall I intervene? Manage or Lead? Adapting John Kotter's basic definitions – here are the distinct characteristics of the two systems of intervention:

- **MANAGING**
a process or system or relationship - aimed at producing predictability, stability and order.

- **LEADING**
a process or system or relationship - aimed at producing change to bring about a new reality.

In other words, managing is more about *doing* things that make delivering products & services to customers possible – consistently enough over time for trust to build within an increasingly healthy supplier-customer relationship.

Leading, on the other hand, is more to do with *being* the living embodiment of a new reality that is needing to be created. Far from controlled stability, it concerns learning from, yet simultaneously letting go of, the past – and living the preferred future reality now, in the present – being the change. The process of leading includes deliberately de-stabilising the system, long enough for a new reality to become established and stabilised. It also includes coping with any change, chaos and instability coming from beyond the boundary of what is considered to be within the direct influence of the leader.

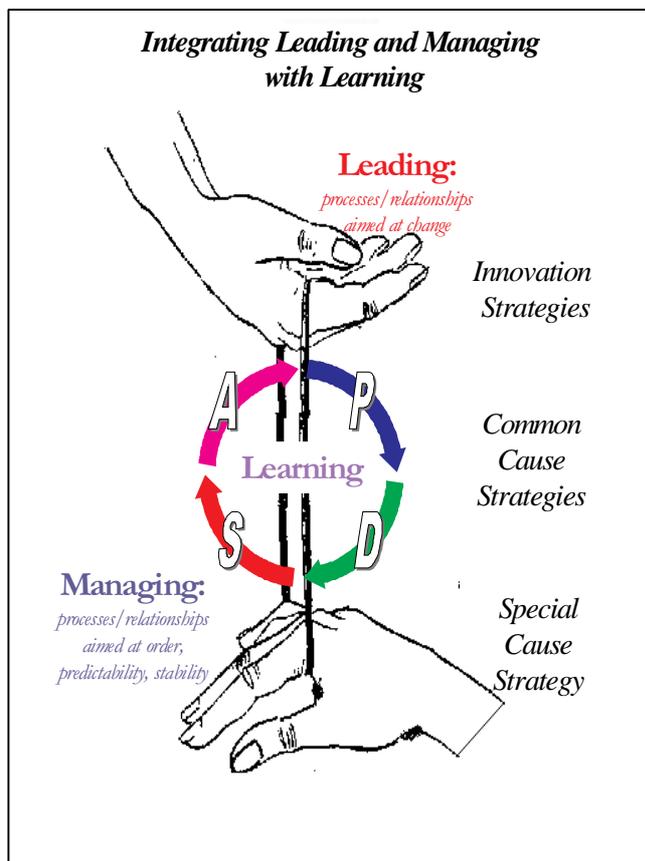
If you accept the two definitions above, the very notion of “managing change” may seem like an oxymoron. The idea that change can be managed at all appears an impossibility – for how can you both destabilise and stabilise things or events at one and the same time? Is it any wonder that Risk Management has become so much in vogue? The main purpose of this essay is to better understand how we think and feel about leading and managing such that we can be more aware of how we may productively and simultaneously engage in both processes.

Choosing from moment to moment, from process to process, whether to manage or lead is necessarily a tension – hopefully a tension that is constructive rather than a destructive. But that all depends:

What happens all too often is that M/Ls (8) implement ill thought through plans, without properly designed or even considered experimentation – where the Learning/ Cost ratio is minimised – and without a clear and fully shared set of expectations, or end-in-mind (4).

Moreover, the few critical delivery processes of which stability (predictability) is demanded by customers, and that therefore require good management, are often not handled in a way that assures predictability. This is either because they are continually “*tampered*” with (5,6) or because those accountable for each process fail to see the virtue in maintaining stability and the deep learning that can be derived from this action/logic. In the NHS currently the requisite skills sadly are not taught to either managers or clinicians – despite the explicit recommendation that this is now needed in the 2013 Berwick Report.

I am underlining the importance of having a few developmentally late-staged individuals in key positions – even one can make a transformational difference. Striking a good balance between constructive and destructive intervention may well depend upon it. Such an individual is likely to inherently appreciate the two processes of leading and managing, appreciate their difference and have an intuitive sense of which to use when. The two processes are mapped as an appendix to this essay as a flow chart – a tool that is widely deployed as a *standard* in all organisations pursuing quality as a core part of their strategy, and importantly a tool that is understood by *conventional* beings. If you refer to them now, you will notice immediately that the driving force in both processes is the process of **Learning** – the essence of which is experimentation (referred to as **P-D-S-A**).

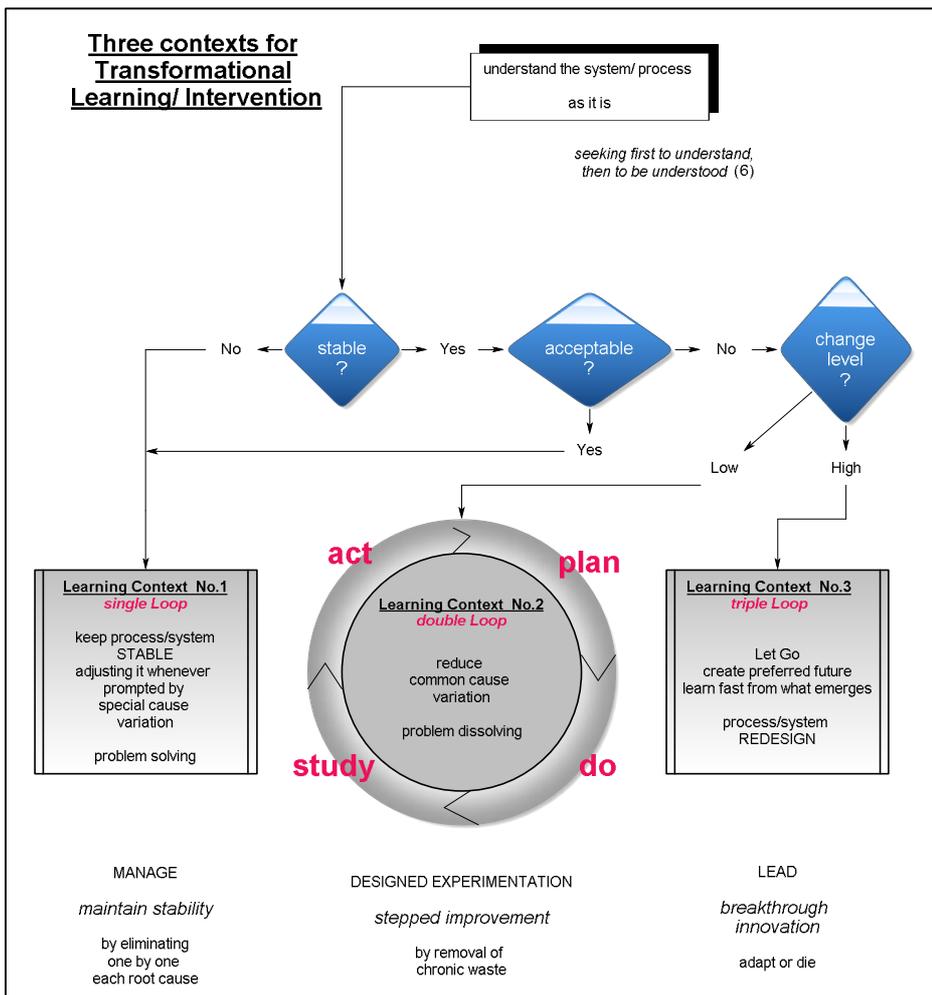


The diagram above is meant to capture the sense of tension between managing and leading. When coaching executives, I sometimes notice it and name it as a tension – and doing so virtually always strikes a resonant chord, since all executives wrestle continually with these two apparently contradictory modes. Next, I often might suggest that a coachee start to lead by managing (stabilising) a few well-chosen processes – in order to create the conditions in which systemic experimentation may begin – and so that change can happen in a way that maximises the learning identified as being of the highest strategic importance for their organisation.

Experimenting : the third process/ mode of intervention

The insight that Shewhart, and later Deming, had had prior to WW2 was that if managerial leaders could be taught how to systematically experiment by conducting real time action research, and if organisational structures could be put in place to enable both that experimentation and the retention of knowledge generated over time, then huge enhancement in organisational efficacy could be unleashed. Indeed enormous competitive advantage would be created. Ninety years later, when analysing the evolutionary path of organisations like Toyota, we know just how much of a difference.

The diagram below serves to illustrate simply how the M/L might apply each of the three intervention strategies.



In this essay I am in effect proposing that there are three generic intervention modes: MANAGING, EXPERIMENTING, and LEADING. Let me now expand a little on each.

Choosing how to intervene: 3 strategies for 3 contexts

MANAGING WELL:

(Learning context No.1)

Carefully select a few critical processes (preferably with the help of your customers & other stakeholders) that require consistency and sustainability, and for which you can take responsibility. Set-up both results-based and process-based measures which when control charted enable continual monitoring for stability and can detect signs of instability (chaos) in real time.

Aim to keep the chosen process stable and (hence) predictably on target (as specified by the customer) - with minimum variation (17). Act on the signals indicating that special causes of variation are present, and act to eliminate these (root) causes – over time reducing the inherent variation and increasing consistency.

This is the definition of “continual improvement” as coined by Walter Shewhart when working in Bell Telephone’s Hawthorne Plant in the 1920’s and 30’s, as he helped managers there in their quest for a uniformity that their customers would find more dependable – which in effect defines the process for good management.

Shewhart studied the managers running the Western Electric Company’s Hawthorne Plant and witnessed them wrestling with two kinds of variation:

1. Variation from CHANCE causes, the same causes from hour to hour, lot to lot, worker to worker. (Deming’s term was Common Cause variation).
2. Variation from an ASSIGNABLE cause. (Deming’s term was Special Cause variation).

Why had Shewhart been called-in to help?

The Hawthorne plant managers were required to achieve uniformity, so that the customers (telephone companies) who bought their product would be able to depend upon it – find it reliable. The aim was noble. Their methods, though, were folly. They took action – making some kind (any kind) of a change at every sign of departure from uniformity. They were smart enough and honest enough to observe that their actions only made this worse, and sought help. Shewhart was called in, a theoretical physicist who happened to be working at the newly formed Bell Telephone Laboratories in New York.

It is noticeable in my work today just how commonplace it is to find managers intervening with insufficient awareness of what is really happening, or likely to happen – and then denying the ensuing unpalatable results. I frequently come across managerial leaders who seemingly work under the assumption that their actions can lead to one of only two outcomes: things either get better, or nothing changes – denying the possibility that their actions may make things worse. At least the managers at Western Electric asked for help – and Shewhart was able to tell them that they themselves by their interventions were frequently making things worse rather than better. Deming later referred to this as “*tampering*” – an expansion upon Shewhart’s original findings.

Shewhart realised that there were two kinds of mistake when intervening to achieve uniformity:

- **MISTAKE 1.** Attribute an outcome to a special cause of variation when actually it came from common causes of variation.
- **MISTAKE 2.** Attribute an outcome to common causes of variation when actually it came from a special cause.

Both mistakes are costly. If you assume an event is a special cause when in fact it is common to the system, you might end up wasting time explaining something which isn't worth talking about – or you might jump into action when it would have been better doing nothing – or you might single out someone for praise when it is not merited. You might also blame someone for something outside of their control; or change a forecast needlessly; or inadvertently increase variation by making an unnecessary adjustment to the process/ system.

If you assume an event is due to common cause variation when in fact it is a special cause, you could well end up spending money to change a process needlessly; or waste money training *everyone* when only a few need help; or make the process more complex e.g. by requiring all output to be inspected; or you might charter a team to address an issue when there is not really an issue to address; or you might change the process when doing nothing would have been better; or you may miss an opportunity to learn about what is really at the root of many problems that otherwise may seem unrelated.

Anyone may vow from this moment henceforth, never to make Mistake 1. Simply attribute any outcome to common causes. In doing this however, they will maximise their Mistake 2- type losses.

Likewise, anyone may henceforth vow never to make Mistake 2. Simply attribute any outcome to a special cause. In doing this however, they will maximise their Mistake 1-type losses.

It would be good never to make Mistake 1 and never to make Mistake 2. This unfortunately is impossible. Shewhart settled on a different aim: make Mistake 1 now and then. Make Mistake 2 now and then, whilst regulating the frequencies of the two mistakes to achieve minimum economic loss from the two types of mistake. To this end, he gave to the world the **Control Chart**, with 3-sigma limits, as a guide for *pro-action*. This tool does a marvellous job and under a wealth of applications works. The ubiquitous XmR Chart in particular is easy to calculate and to use, and works in at least 90% of organisational situations in my experience, even more than this in Service Industries. In 2007-08 when working with a Primary Care Trust I noticed that tampering was endemic and that virtually no one had been trained in these kind of problem-solving skills that in other industries are considered basic skills that everyone should know about. Later I met a surgeon, Simon Dodds, who had noticed the same thing and together we conceived of a software tool based upon the XmR Control Chart that would enable people to teach themselves these basic management skills, simply by using their own *time series* data to identify systemic changes in real time. BaseLine® has been available since 2010 and is now endorsed by NHS IQ and the Royal College of GPs. This does not mean however that it is yet very widely used.

When Don Berwick published his report in 2013, recommending that all NHS staff “**Learn, master and apply the modern methods of quality control, quality improvement and quality planning**” (22) his intention likewise was to radically enhance the level of basic managerial skill. In my local experience however his recommendation has been wholly ignored. To try to explain why this is, I have recently co-authored a paper entitled.. **Good Science, an antidote to Ben Goldacre’s “bad science”** which is also published by the JOIS and introduced via a blog: www.saasoft.com/blog/?p=4178

In gifting the control chart methodology to the managerial leaders and workers in the Hawthorne Plant, Shewhart in effect bestowed post-conventional real-time thinking and dialogue on the 80% of organisational people who make sense of their world conventionally. A learning organisation – perhaps the first by Senge’s definition (18) – was born.

Statistical stability may be achieved by hunting down and identifying each special cause in real time, at the moment a point goes outside the control limits, and prompting the taking of appropriate action to bring the process back into a stable state. This not only maintains uniformity for the customer but, with the right action, ought to enable a work team to improve the level of uniformity – leading to improvement in the *whole* system i.e. for the customer’s customers, AND for the customers of those customers.

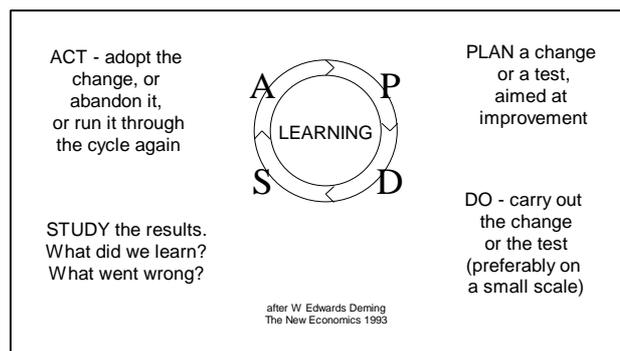
Managing and leading are different processes, but requiring people to be either a manager or a leader, not both, is asking for trouble.

A popular concept these days is “*Leading on the Edge of Chaos*”, that leadership is somehow all about being able to be tolerant of chaos, another name for instability. Shewhart effectively provided a means of enabling individuals throughout an organisation to manage (and lead) proactively rather than reactively by operationally defining where the edge of chaos lies, enabling people to distinguish moment-to-moment whether the process of most interest to them is experiencing chaos or not. He created the possibility for *everyone*, not only the special few post-conventional sense-makers, to both manage and lead well – simultaneously.

EXPERIMENTING OR PLANNING CHANGE WELL:

(Learning context No.2)

Walter Shewhart also was amongst the first to advocate the use of a formal learning cycle: P-D-C-A (later amended to P-D-S-A by Shewhart’s student, Deming):



Shewhart suggested that stepped change for more rapid process/system improvement becomes possible by designing experiments to test improvement theories, mostly generated from within the team that works in the process. Testing theories, one-by-one, requires rigorous method, but is a core skill for the empowered M/L wanting to make changes to the process for which they are responsible whilst continuing to deliver what the customers have been promised. The Control Chart, sometimes now more commonly called a “**system/ process behaviour chart**” (17), enables the manager and team to see clearly the effects of their experiments, beneficial or not. In this way, knowledge and learning accumulate in a coherent and shared manner. A well-designed experiment achieves maximum learning at very low cost,

thus enabling risk to be effectively managed. This thinking has strategic implications, organisationally, as well as for local process management, for risk is the central issue at every level.

"Getting to the future first is less about making heroic investments than it is about de-risking heroic ambitions. Unless the assumed link between ambition and risk is severed, few managers will have the courage to commit to global leadership" (11).

So, why not experiment all the time on every process? Because there are too many processes, and problem *dissolving* through even well-designed experimentation is costly. Better to rely on Learning Context No.1 – the elimination, one by one, of special causes where the process is already capable of meeting customer requirements, yet may still be improved as a by-product of continually problem solving with the aim of *maintaining* the process in a stable state (an unnatural state for any delivery process).

The tacit knowledge creation system that underlies the Toyota Production System for example can be captured in four basic rules. These rules guide the design, operation, and improvement of every important activity, connection, and pathway – for every product and service:

Rule 1: All work shall be highly specified as to content, sequence, timing and outcome.

Rule 2: Every customer-supplier connection must be direct, and there must be an unambiguous yes-or-no way to send requests and receive responses.

Rule 3: The pathway for every product and service must be simple and direct.

Rule 4: Any improvement must be made in accordance with the **scientific method** (P-D-S-A), under the guidance of a teacher, at the lowest possible level in the organisation.

(13)

Though basic, these rules have surely been created by post-conventional sense makers. They have evolved in this way because they work, and they work because of the spirit of collaborative experimentation embodied within them. They may appear rigid at first blush, but their very rigidity is liberating for an organisation that is intent upon learning well. A true sign of a highly evolved organisation is its ability to operate as a "Liberating Discipline (15).

"All the rules (which are generated bottom-up) require that activities, connections, and flow paths have built-in tests to signal problems automatically. It is the continual response to problems that makes this seemingly rigid system so flexible and adaptable to changing circumstances." (13)

LEADING WELL :

(Learning context No.3)

It is tempting for M/Ls when facing a difficult situation, one that feels chaotic, to change several things at once. They may even feel that there is just too little time for any other approach, and of course this

may be the case, maybe because of the felt pressure of competing against M/Ls in other organisations who appear to be managing & planning change faster and better than you.

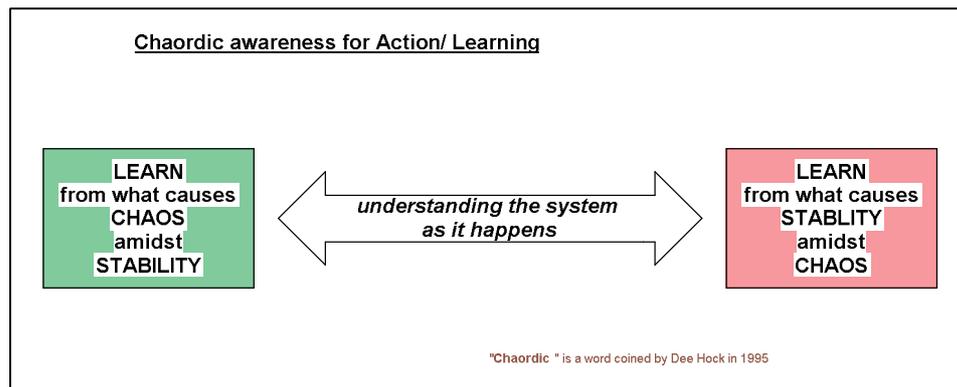
However, changing several things at once is risky and can lead to disaster. It is not difficult to find M/Ls who will tell you that they had nothing to lose: "*It was a backs-to-the-wall job and we simply had to go for it, we simply had to change as many things as we could all at once*". It is however virtually impossible to find a M/L prepared to admit that such an approach led to disaster. This is either because they are too ashamed to tell you of the chaos that they caused, or because they and their organisations have since disappeared and are no longer available for study.

Nevertheless, sometimes the very aim of the system has shifted, or customers themselves have fundamentally altered their requirements e.g. from carburettors to fuel-injection systems. Responding to this level of change requires innovation or breakthrough. It requires nothing less than a whole *system/process* redesign. Profound change requires the stuff of leadership – a letting-go of outmoded processes, to make way for some new and hopefully better processes. Agreeing a map of what is wanted/needed and moving towards this new reality whilst carrying *everyone* (unless the process/system is a personal one and you are unavoidably alone) with you, even if it feels like a leap in the dark.

Ironically, such profound transformation requires stability as a starting point even more so than in Context No.1 (the process of managing), because rapid learning is very difficult in conditions of instability. If you do not believe this, just take a moment to recall how you first learned to ride a bike, or to swim. I often ask groups of people to do this, and it is not unusual to find someone ashamed to admit that they cannot ride a bike, or forced to admit they cannot swim. When asked to describe what happened when they tried, they typically describe some kind of trauma e.g. that when being taught in an unstable (literally) situation – when the teacher was out of tune with the instability being felt by the learner. Most parents teaching their child to swim or to ride for the first time attempt to simulate stability at least temporarily by running alongside to support the child. This most challenging of tasks is all the easier in modern times because of buoyancy aids and stabilisers.

Central to the process of leading therefore, is the skill of generating stability (order) out of the chaos – this is especially important because during major change and transformation much less is predictable, much less is plan-able, and much more is emergent. Ignoring what comes up unexpectedly moment-to-moment, hoping to be able to adjust to the new situation only when forced by events (with or without tampering) is to court disaster.

Dee Hock, founder of the Visa Credit Card network in the 1960s, has coined the phrase "**chaordic**" to capture the essence of what it takes to lead well i.e. a high level of understanding and awareness. He describes it as like being tuned-in to two radio frequencies at once – Radio Chaos & Radio Order (7). When people refer to others as great leaders, they are reflecting their sense of someone with multi-dimensional sensing who knows, apparently magically, just how to transform situations, processes, systems, organisations – even how to reinvent themselves. Such leaders appreciate more than anyone the power of managing well – continually learning from the two action logics working as one.



Jim Collins (1) calls this level of power Level 5 leadership. In his recent 5 year study of exceptional companies he discovered that only 11 companies out of 1435 (all listed in the Fortune 500 during 1965-95) could be considered "great". This is defined as having had cumulative stock returns at or below the general stock market for 15 years, and punctuated by a **"transition point"** which was then immediately followed by cumulative returns at least three times the market rate over the next 15 years. Those that made the cut averaged cumulative stock returns of 6.9 times the general stock market for the 15 years from the *point of transition*. To put that in to perspective, General Electric under Jack Welch outperformed the general stock market by a mere 2.8 times during his tenure from 1986 to 2000.

Collins' research team found that in all 11 cases there was a key individual at the helm, and who in each case seemed to possess something distinctive and special. Despite not believing the data, his research team kept telling him.. "We can't ignore these top executives, there is something consistently unusual about them" (1). He tried to argue with them that many of the comparison companies must have had great leaders too – but eventually the data proved incontrovertible.

Maybe organisations that have a reputation for being well managed are underpinned by an extraordinary leadership process that is borne of an appreciation for the irony that you best make change happen by first making it possible to keep things as they are, an aspect of what Jim Collins calls **"Level 5 duality"** (1). The irony is that it seems to take a great leadership process to enable a great management process. The kind of irony that says there is as much insight and learning to be had from managing (keeping things the same) as from leading (causing things to change). Shewhart's genius was that he was able to provide a tool that enables insightful managerial leadership to happen at all organisational levels, including the shop floor. That of course is providing that those in overall charge take sufficient responsibility for the whole system, and are capable of creating an empowering environment in which people can continually use the control chart and a handful of other vital learning tools to provide the insight necessary for improving *their* processes and system.

Putting it all together: Three Modes of Intervention x Seven Developmental Action-Logics

Here are two matrices, each with 21 cells, their purpose is to illustrate the seven main developmental action-logics when applied to the three modes of intervention. The first is for a conventional organisation, with no special attention paid by its senior leaders to the creation of structures that enable continual learning. The second represents a Learning Organisation (a la Toyota) with structures and disciplines that liberate continual learning.

CONVENTIONAL ORGANISATION

	MANAGING	EXPERIMENTING	LEADING
ALCHEMIST	I see many levels, patterns, archetypes, in an eternal now. And from this multi-dimensional “chaordic” viewpoint high-leverage sub-processes can be chosen for owner-identification and intervention.	We live in a universe that is alive, creative, and experimenting all the time to discover what is possible, using messes to get to well-ordered solutions, finding the opportunities/ possibilities, and what works rather than what is right.	A healthy system depends upon appropriate leading and managing at each organisational level, and upon a few like me who can influence the creation of a Long Term (7- 50+ years) whole/ integrated strategy.
STRATEGIST	I manage systems in alignment with principles, mostly self-created, using gaps as a means to refine the principles and drive adaption to the outside world.	I expose and test assumptions/ questions/ theories to create Double Loop inside-out Learning – all in the interest of system integrity.	I see what emerges and create an environment pervaded by action/ inquiry in the interests of system-wide effectiveness, integrity, mutuality and sustainability.
INDIVIDUALIST	I do not mind being the one who breaks the rules to test the boundaries. I am increasingly thinking systemically, wrestling with complexity and multiple answers.	I am more open to the possibility of serendipitous learning. Being explicit about our assumptions, our theory, our specific expectations, at the outset of a pilot helps learning about ourselves and the system or process.	My influence as a leader may increase if I withdraw and consciously choose the role I need to play, within this organisation that I now view as a complex system.
ACHIEVER	I would rather do the right things than to blindly do things right, but I know what my goals are. When I see a problem, I will find its (one) root cause and deal with it.	We will run a pilot if there is time, otherwise we’ll Plan-Do-Review. We should agree what actions are needed, and then carry them out.	I am concerned about the wider system, but experience tension between detail and big picture. I will initiate sporadic (even if indiscriminate) action.
EXPERT	I am interested in perfecting my immediate process or project. I prefer to approach things objectively and sequentially, preferably one action at a time.	I am prepared to run experiments but only if required to do so. Teamwork helps, provided that every individual adheres to the rules.	I take the lead by giving people the knowledge they need to do their job. As Leader I believe in acting fairly, even if this means having to treat everyone the same.
DIPLOMAT	Leave me alone to do my job. “Please don’t criticise me.” I avoid up-stream/ downstream conflict where I can.	I avoid trying anything new, or not expected of me, for it might lead to trouble. I deny even serendipitous learning.	Only one person can hold power over my group, and I would prefer it was someone else.
OPPORTUNIST	I trust to luck. Manipulate symptoms. Flout any laid-down rules.	I’ll “try it on” to see what I can “get away with”. I test rules – to destruction, with little consideration of consequences.	I order events, so that others will do as I say. “If you scratch my back, I’ll scratch yours.” “I’ll trade an eye for an eye.”

LEARNING ORGANISATION – with liberating discipline

	MANAGING	EXPERIMENTING	LEADING
ALCHEMIST	We can generate diversity at low cost if we observe “ <i>reflective patience, the discipline to leave well enough alone and let results unfold. It takes discipline (and courage) to focus attention on nurturing relationships among steps in the work.</i> ” (9)	I am watching for opportunities for Meta Learning – and how to adapt and shift the system for the next generation/ epoch.	More than merely respond and continually adapt to external forces – we have an opportunity to influence and lead our community, our industry, our world.
STRATEGIST	My role is to help managers and team leaders understand their responsibilities and enable them to carry them out. Improving actual operations is not my job— that is the job of the in-process people. I ensure the structures are in place to enable them to do it.	I ensure work is constructed as a series of nested, ongoing, experiments - that will yield continual learning and improvement, whether the work is routine or complex.	My role is to accomplish continual adaption to the changing external world and to serve the market. I know that it is the underlying principles rather than specific tools and processes that give the company competitive advantage.
INDIVIDUALIST	I integrate the work system with the wider system (including external suppliers) with requisite structure – and maintain its integrity.	I observe people and machines and ensure countermeasures are structured as experiments to be tested. I obtain approval for all my own proposed changes from the people actually doing the work.	I act as an enabler/ developer - a coach rather than a technical specialist. I am learner, leader, teacher - to assist and enhance people’s powers of observation and experimentation.
ACHIEVER	I build my system’s collective knowledge so as to achieve the ideal result: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. defect free for the customer 2. smallest batch size possible 3. supplied on demand 4. delivered immediately 5. produced with zero waste 6. safe work environment (14) 	I live the ideal, and try to model the ideal – in order to build capacity and capability over time – even up to 2-3 years. I apply the scientific method to improving all organisational processes identified as core e.g. the knowledge storage and retrieval system.	I lead by role modelling the philosophy – and seek to build effective inter-company communication, so that goods & services can flow consistently through the supply chain.

EXPERT	I know that if the activity is done as specified, our product/ service will be defect free (on target with minimum variation). I see to it that people know their job, that deviation from optimum is observable in real time, and that knowledge is standardised and adhered to.	I inculcate the scientific method to ensure that people are clear about the expectations they will be testing when they implement the planned changes – in an activity, connection, or flow path - that will improve cost, quality, lead time, batch size, or safety by a measured amount.	I lead by asking questions, to ensure people are sticking to the rules. I am the embodiment of technical and process knowledge. Pride & respect come from acquired knowledge. Change is controlled via systematic experimentation.
DIPLOMAT	As a team member, I do not like conflict or to be criticized, but in this system it's made easy to admit errors, as they're seen as useful for us learning about our process.	I avoid trying anything new, but it is expected that I try to improve the process, so I volunteer suggestions for improvement whenever I can, and play my part in organized group experimentation.	The Team Leader lets me know what I need to do, and helps us share what's changing and what must change. I may unilaterally stop the workflow – as I know I won't be persecuted for it
OPPORTUNIST	I work within a system that is so closely specified nothing is left to chance. Everything is made visible, so there is no real opportunity to cheat – and it pays to play the game.	As new methods are tried-out, I get asked questions about what is changing, and what is staying the same – normally I don't like “fessing-up” but here it pays.	I am not allowed to make changes unless I can demonstrate the capability and the knowledge – it pays to keep your nose clean and follow rules to the letter. If I break them I tell someone in authority.

Conclusions & after word

By developing Shewhart's ideas, Deming (with help from Taguchi) in effect gave the world *the* definition of good management: achieving and maintaining stability by keeping processes/ systems predictably on target with minimum variation. I personally experienced Deming as passionately interested in the difference that good management can make in the world, but in his last few years he talked more explicitly about leadership as distinct from management. The working title for his final book was “back to the individual” (6). At the end of a productive life enabling organisations to be better managed as a whole system, he came to the realisation that individuals, themselves as whole systems, have a key role to play.

Deming knew that organisations to be structured to learn need systems thinking – and that organisations need M/Ls who are sufficiently developed to know how to think and intervene systemically – in other words he recognised the need for personally developing the capability to lead (and manage). I believe he would not have been surprised by Jim Collins' research findings on the quantum difference that post-conventionally thinking/ feeling leaders make to their organisations – and often also to society as a whole.

By giving us the Control Chart – enabling people to distinguish moment-to-moment whether the process/ system of most interest to them is experiencing chaos – Shewhart effectively provided a means of enabling individuals up and down the organisation to manage (and lead) proactively – regardless of their personal stage of development – to self-empower and, within their sphere of influence, to take control. Following in his footsteps, Deming sought to find ways to create organisational structures that could accommodate the huge potential for organisational learning made possible by Shewhart's invention.

Deming was passionate about creating systems and structures that enable knowledge to be generated and retained. His impact in Japan demonstrates the efficacy of establishing structures in which double-loop learning becomes possible for people at the Diplomat and Expert stages of development – I hope my second matrix sufficiently captures the essence of how double-loop learning can be embedded in an organisation that is structured for learning.

In the UK at least, the movement that was created around Deming in the late 80's was dominated by Statistics, and to a lesser extent his Theory of Knowledge and Systems Thinking. He surprised a lot of people when he made PSYCHOLOGY one of his 4 elements in the System of Profound Knowledge (SoPK). He might have simply called it PEOPLE – he might have called it Sociology, or maybe Social Psychology, but he called it Psychology – the study of the mind. I believe he bequeathed the SoPK because he intended us to continue to explore both individual motivation and paradigm development.

Empathy for paradigms and their evolution is therefore to be prized – and empathy comes from seeking first to understand, only *then* seeking to be understood (4). Deming seemed to understand the importance of developing empathy for different worldviews – he knew that each contains coherence, just as in its own world Euclidian geometry makes perfect sense. When consulting he spent much of his time listening and asking people questions that might develop paradigm understanding – theirs and his.

The work of Torbert, Cook-Greuter and others gives those who seek to intervene productively into organisational and personal systems a practical way of diagnosing the particular worldview that pervades a client system – in order to determine exactly what is needed to leverage learning. I hope I have succeeded in convincing you that the personal paradigm development of Managerial Leaders increases their awareness, power and capability for spawning the progressive development of their organisation? I know from my own work just how powerful my client system interventions can be when I am primed with knowledge about the developmental stage of key individual M/Ls.

Torbert also uses a developmental model for organisational development (not referred to in this essay) that parallels the individual model described here. If I have sparked your interest, I refer you again to his 2004 book (16) in which he elegantly describes three cases that illustrate the power of intervening in a client system when equipped with diagnostic knowledge of key individuals, and of the organisation as a whole system.

Whatever your own developmental centre of gravity, I am hoping that as a consequence of reading this essay you will start to lead more power-fully, to experiment more fruitfully, and to manage more wisely?

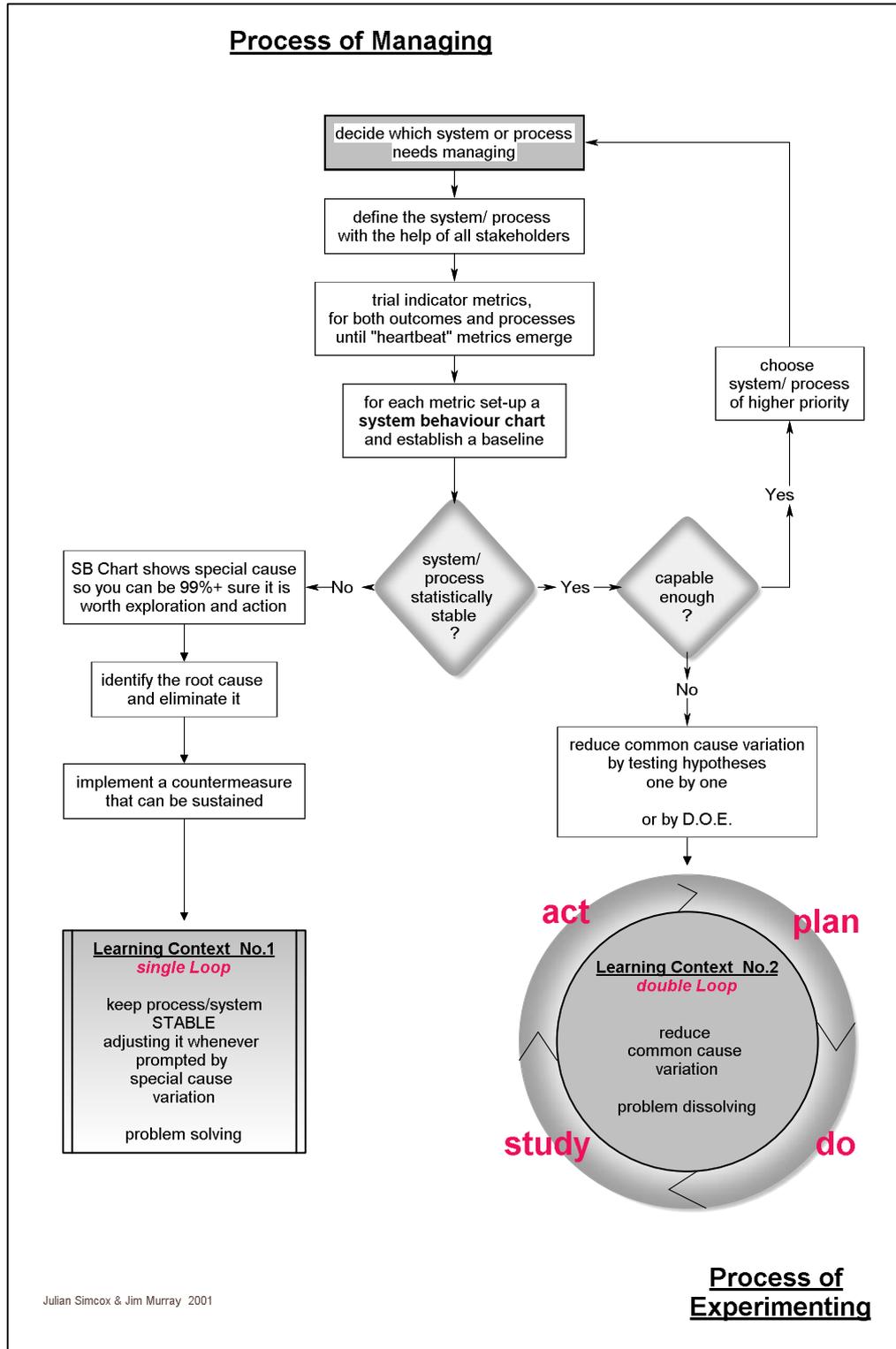
Subsequently to the writing of this 2005 essay I further developed the model into being one that would work for conventional M/Ls as much as for post-conventional ones – balancing the level of change needed with the level of risk that's politically tolerable – and all framed by the paradigm-shifts that typically characterise these two developmental epochs. This model is described in detail in the essay: “**Managerial Leadership: Five action logics viewed via two developmental lenses**” – also available via the Journal of improvement Science.

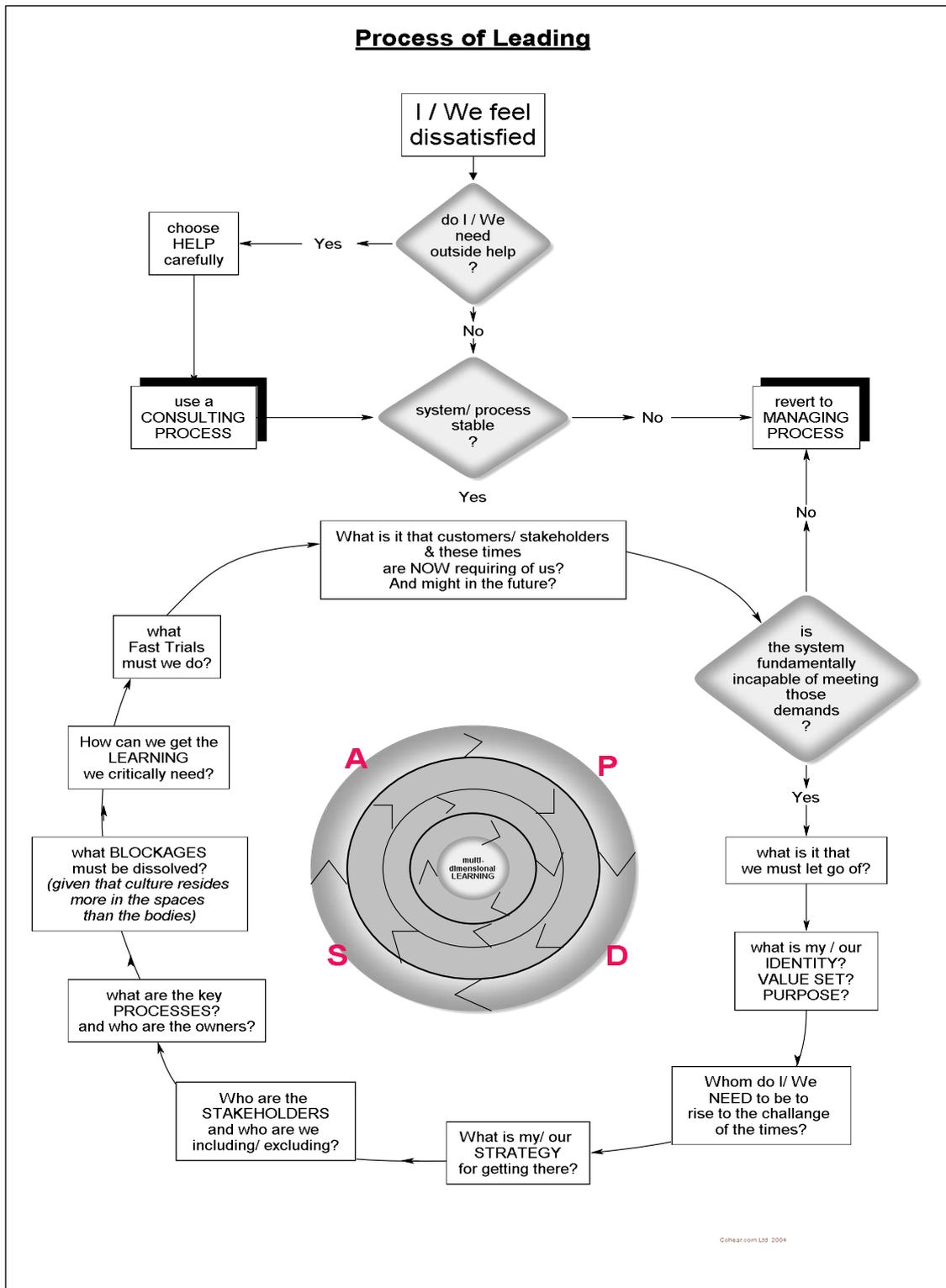
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Author



In 2005, Julian Simcox was an independent organisational & personal coach/facilitator, practising out of Bristol (UK). Nowadays he is largely retired, and working as a Patient Leader in his local North Somerset NHS – both with commissioners and providers.

He is Chair of the Practice Participation Group for the GP surgery where he has been a patient since 1984. He is also the patient representative on the Quality Assurance Group for North Somerset CCG. In both roles, he seeks to know and understand just what leads

to quality outcomes for patients. He is especially passionate about enabling patients to self-empower and take charge of their own health outcomes over time. In 2010, he co-designed the software tool: BaseLine® which makes it easy for managers, clinicians and patients to identify and interpret systemic change in real time. This tool is becoming an NHS standard and hopefully will prompt more of what Bill Torbert calls Action Inquiry. Recently he has also become a Public Contributor for the West of England Academic Health Science Network who bring together the local health service community: industry, higher education, research bodies, patients and the wider public – with the aim of taking patient care and experience to new levels.

Sponsor



Simon Dodds studied medicine and computer science at Cambridge before following a career in general and then vascular surgery. During his training, he researched the problem of modelling blood flow in networks of diseased arteries and then used computer simulations to develop more accurate non-invasive tests for arterial disease. As a consultant surgeon at Good Hope Hospital in North Birmingham, he applied his skills as a software and system designer and a clinician in the redesign of the vascular surgery

clinic

and the leg ulcer service. The project earned a national innovation award for service improvement and the story told in the book called *Three Wins: Service Improvement Using Value Stream Design*. This experience led directly to the creation of SAASoft, a global portal for the development and dissemination of the theory, techniques, tools and training of Improvement Science in Healthcare. His current NHS role is part-time consultant general surgeon at Heart of England NHS Trust.

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