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The Exercises

SO FAR WE HAVE LOOKED AT SOME OF THE CHALLENGES involved in overcoming blind spots and have hinted at how they might be addressed. This last chapter is intended to offer some exercises that can help you apply the learning practices and experiment with ways of accelerating learning, both on and off the job.

The chapter is divided into eight sections, each one dedicated to a particular learning practice. Obviously, each learning practice represents a huge, underlying body of knowledge and range of techniques that we cannot possibly reflect here. However, the exercises provide useful, illustrative support when introducing these ideas and practices, as well as being practical tools for accelerating learning on the job.

The First Practice – Direct Attention

1. Extend My Paradigm Use

Identify the paradigms that are important for your organization. You can do this by visiting and listening to as wide a range of stakeholders as is possible. Listen to the paradigms and constructs they use. Once you have done this, rate your familiarity with the paradigm. Next, rate its importance in relationship to your organization, your stakeholders and your role (this is best done in consultation with all your stakeholders, particularly your boss, peers and direct reports). Where there is a mismatch, identify what actions you will take in order to expand the number and range of the paradigms you use. Overleaf is a blank pro forma to start you off. This is followed by an example of a completed paradigm review.

Using Paradigms to Expand the Complexity of Your Thinking

1. Read through the paradigms described below.
2. Identify any paradigms that are not covered and which are important in your organisation. For example there may be technical and sector specific paradigms such as a 'scientific' paradigm or a 'fund raising' paradigm.
3. Go through each paradigm and rate your familiarity with it out of 10.
4. Assess the importance of each paradigm for your role but remember to consult key stakeholders in your role for their opinions on this (it may be that you have a blind spot here!).
5. Devise an action plan based on the results – in what areas would it be beneficial for you to expand your cognitive complexity? How are you going to do this?

Paradigms	Familiarity Out of 10	Importance Out of 10	Action Plan
Business			
Clients – knowing individual customers' strategies, needs, issues and concerns			
Strategy – knowing your strategy and how that relates to environmental trends			
Competitors – knowing them as individuals, understanding their strategy and positioning			
Commercial – knowledge of current opportunities, risks, deals			
Suppliers – knowing them, understanding their issues, monitoring the relationship			
Global – socio, political and economic trends			

Paradigms	Familiarity Out of 10	Importance Out of 10	Action Plan
Ethical			
Environment – trends, stakeholders demands and actions, internal policies			
Social responsibility – organisation’s wider role in society and in the world.			

People	Familiarity Out of 10	Importance Out of 10	Action Plan
Power – where does it lie, who has it, how to increase it, how is it being used, your own			
Staff – understanding individual needs and motivators; focusing on people strategies			
Climate – thinking about the mood in your organisation and how to improve it			
Leadership – defining, spotting, developing and rewarding leadership			
Relationships – monitoring, extending, improving your relationships			
Self – your goals, hopes, strengths, development needs, how you are perceived by others. Are you learning and changing?			

Organisational	Familiarity Out of 10	Importance Out of 10	Action Plan
Structure – latest thinking/ practice, what’s working, what isn’t, what are you doing, what do staff want			

Continued

Paradigms	Familiarity Out of 10	Importance Out of 10	Action Plan
Organisational			
Marketing – latest thinking/ practice, what’s working, what isn’t, what are you doing in this area, what are the views of the marketing professionals			
Processes – latest thinking/ practice, what’s working, what isn’t, how do you know? How are you gathering information			
HR – latest thinking/practice, what’s working, what isn’t, what are the views of the people in HR			
Culture – latest thinking/ practice, what’s working, what isn’t			
Governance and ethics – latest thinking/practice, what’s working, what isn’t; who’s working in this area?			
Goals and measures – what you pay attention to and measure			
Technology – latest thinking/ practice, what’s working, what isn’t, what are the views of the professionals working in this area?			

Finance	Familiarity Out of 10	Importance Out of 10	Action Plan
Stockmarket – how are you viewed by the markets, how do you want to be viewed			
Management accounting – what processes do you have for supporting decisions, are they adequate, what do staff think/want			

Paradigms	Familiarity Out of 10	Importance Out of 10	Action Plan
Other			

Conclusions – My Attention Profile

EXAMPLE: Completed Paradigm Review

Paradigms	Familiarity Out of 10	Importance Out of 10	Action Plan
Business			
Clients – knowing individual customers’ strategies, needs, issues and concerns	8	10	Visit EEplc with Clive next week
Strategy – knowing your strategy and how that relates to environmental trends	7	7	
Competitors – knowing them as individuals, understanding their strategy and positioning	3	7	
Commercial – knowledge of current opportunities, risks, deals	8	8	
Suppliers – knowing them, understanding their issues, monitoring the relationship	3	5	
Global – socio, political and economic trends	8	9	

Ethical	Familiarity Out of 10	Importance Out of 10	Action Plan
Environment –trends, stakeholders demands and actions, internal policies	3	7	Visit Carol and see what we are doing
Social responsibility – organisation’s wider role in society and in the world	3	7	Sign up for corporate charity scheme

Paradigms	Familiarity Out of 10	Importance Out of 10	Action Plan
People			
Power – where does it lie, who has it, how to increase it, how is it being used, your own	4	8	Go on a course!
Staff – understanding individual needs and motivators; focusing on people strategies	8	8	
Climate – thinking about the mood in your organisation and how to improve it	5	7?	Talk to HR about this.
Leadership – defining, spotting, developing and rewarding leadership	9	10	
Relationships – monitoring, extending, improving your relationships	6	10	Get a coach
Self – your goals, hopes, strengths, development needs, how you are perceived by others. Are you learning and changing?	10	10	

Organisational	Familiarity Out of 10	Importance Out of 10	Action Plan
Structure – latest thinking/ practice, what's working, what isn't, what are you doing, what do staff want	8	5	Spend less time on this
Marketing – latest thinking/ practice, what's working, what isn't, what are you doing in this area, what are the views of the marketing professionals	4	5	
Processes – latest thinking/ practice, what's working, what isn't, how do you know? How are you gathering information	4	7	Delegate to Yvonne

Paradigms	Familiarity Out of 10	Importance Out of 10	Action Plan
Organisational			
HR – latest thinking/practice, what’s working, what isn’t, what are the views of the people in HR	8	7	
Culture – latest thinking/practice, what’s working, what isn’t	7	7	
Governance and ethics – latest thinking/practice, what’s working, what isn’t; who’s working in this area?	6	8	
Goals and measures – what you pay attention to and measure	4	9	Spend time planning my week
Technology – latest thinking/practice, what’s working, what isn’t, what are the views of the professionals working in this area?	2	8	Spend time with IT manager

Finance	Familiarity Out of 10	Importance Out of 10	Action Plan
Stockmarket – how are you viewed by the markets, how do you want to be viewed	7	9	Spend time with some key investors
Management accounting – what processes do you have for supporting decisions, are they adequate, what do staff think/want	8	9	

Conclusions – My Attention Profile
<p>I’m very focused on myself and my own goals and this shows in my concentration on the business paradigms. Perhaps I don’t concentrate as much as I should on the softer issues, particularly my relationships with others and ‘power’ (both are connected). I need to explore this more.</p> <p>I’m ashamed that I don’t think more about my ethical and social responsibilities. I don’t have much time to do this (I’m too selfish!) but I can at least give money using the organisation’s scheme.</p>

2. Leadership Attention Profiling

This exercise is particularly useful for making sure you are disciplining yourself to ensure you are focusing on the right things. It is best done at regular intervals once you have identified a focus for your attention.

Remember you cannot pay attention to everything. Your attention has a limited capacity. Think of it, therefore, as like a cup, glass, bottle, vase or anything that has a limited capacity. Draw this vessel. Now divide the vessel up to reflect what you pay attention to (in terms of how you use your time) over a typical month, e.g. 10% of your time might be spent on finances; 7.5% on administration; 20% on your direct reports, etc. Try to be as specific as possible. You may want to check your figures by keeping a diary for a month.

Once you have filled your vessel with all the things you pay attention to, focus on one area at a time. Identify what makes you pay attention to this area. There will be inner drivers and outer drivers. First identify the outer drivers – these may be people who tell you that these things are important or legislation that states that you, and only you, have to focus on these areas. Then identify the inner drivers – these are the voices in your head that tell you to do these things. For example, you might spend a lot of time in meetings with your direct reports. One of the drivers for this might be that for you it is important that your team is happy. Having done this, refer back to the focus you identified in the last exercise.

Now evaluate your attention profile. What is central to what you want to achieve, what is relatively important and what is irrelevant? Take an area that takes up a lot of your attention but is not central for your vision. Look at the drivers – can you challenge these in some way? Are you doing these things because you feel comfortable or you cannot let go of control or you cannot trust others to do them?

Having examined your attention profile, identify what you are going to do differently to shape it more in accordance with your vision and in accordance with how you see your role. Is it really a useful investment of your time to spend 20% of it doing admin? What do you need

to do to let go of this? How can you focus your attention on areas that are crucial but which you are currently ignoring?

3. Focusing Attention

As a leader, you need to balance the needs of your stakeholders with your own sense of what is important and what is not. If you listen too much to yourself in isolation from your stakeholders, you may be missing important information. If you listen too much to your stakeholders and not enough to yourself, you are not doing your job. Difficult decisions may have to be made, and stakeholders will often encourage you to avoid them. In addition, Jim Collins emphasizes that it is important to develop your focus in collaboration with your team, rather than before you bring your team together. Not only will these people be responsible for implementation, they will also have important insights which will enrich your perspective. Developing your leadership voice is an important skill that involves listening to others, listening to yourself and constantly adapting to changing circumstances. The exercise below can be done by yourself or in collaboration with your team.

1. Identify all the stakeholders in your leadership. Use the list of paradigms at the beginning of this chapter to help you. Do not leave anyone out – from the government to impoverished farmers in Africa to vociferous environmentalists!
2. Contact all of them. Use this as an opportunity to listen and develop your own knowledge, constructs, paradigms and value set. If you find yourself becoming irritated or angry – listen even harder. Map out the arguments of all your stakeholders, noting key constructs and values that they refer to.
3. Go on a leadership retreat (see the fourth practice). There should, by now, be many voices in your head! The most important task now is to discover your own voice. For this you will need a calm, quiet atmosphere and a skilled facilitator. You will probably find you have many different inner voices talking to you. There will be an excited, passionate voice; there will be a doubtful, uncertain voice. There will be emotional voices and rational voices. There will be voices from the past and voices

calling you to the future. All of these voices need to be acknowledged and looked at.

4. Having done this, time is needed to get perspective on your situation, and you need to reconnect to your own values and dreams. You need to ask yourself questions such as, ‘where does this organization need to go?’, ‘where would I and my people like to take it?’, ‘what common dream do most of us share?’, ‘what difficult decisions need to be made?’, ‘what are the most significant challenges and opportunities facing us right now?’, ‘where is my natural alliance and how powerful is it?’, ‘what would I like my legacy to be?’, ‘what would I love to achieve in my time as leader?’, ‘what is actually possible given the circumstances?’ As you ask these questions, you will feel a sense of excitement as the leadership challenge becomes clear to you, and the journey that the organization needs to take opens up before you.
5. Finally, imagine yourself in two years’ time and write down your achievements as if you have already fulfilled them. For example: I have helped people to recognize the need for change and already people have become more client-oriented. I have a great team in place who are brilliant at implementing change by getting people behind them. The organization feels energized and enthusiastic. Unfortunately, we did have to make a number of staff redundant, but having done that, people now feel much more positive – they recognized that difficult decisions had to be made and were relieved when they finally were. I have the respect of my peers in the sector and am looking forward to increasing our reputation for quality with our clients.
6. Having done this, you should now be able to describe your future desired state and your key priorities for getting there. This will help you focus your attention.
7. Remember that this exercise can just as easily be done with a team, and even if you decide to do it alone, you will probably need to repeat some of it with your team.
8. However, remember that having a focus can narrow your attention too much. Put in place strategies for broadening attention that will help you learn on the way, talking to your stakeholders and constantly adapting your strategy to meet changing circumstances.

The Second Practice – Harness Emotion

1. Interpretive Biases

This is a fun exercise. Take a subject around which there is a lot of emotion. See if you can identify the interpretive biases that you commonly use. Catch yourself and others using them. Take time to reflect on and challenge your interpretations. You can also seek feedback from people to see if they feel you are succumbing to a particular bias or not. If you are addressing an issue as a team, you can ask the team if they feel the team is subject to any of the biases.

Cognitive Distortion	How often do I use it?	How often do I use it?
	My assessment (10 is a lot and 1 is hardly ever)	Other person's assessment. (10 is a lot and 1 is hardly ever)

Confirmation bias

Only paying attention to and believing data that confirm what you already believe.

Black/white thinking

Seeing the world in terms of a few extremes – if it is not black then it must be white.

Mind reading

Assuming you know the motivations, thoughts and feelings of others.

Flooding

If emotion is felt strongly enough, it must be justifiable; strong emotions are always right.

Overgeneralization

Taking one event or piece of evidence and making general rules based upon it.

Continued

Cognitive Distortion	How often do I use it?	How often do I use it?
	My assessment (10 is a lot and 1 is hardly ever)	Other person's assessment. (10 is a lot and 1 is hardly ever)

Personalization

Believing that the motives for other people's behaviour concerns how they affect you – 'I know he said that to hurt me'.

Stereotyping

Classifying people in crude and often negative ways.
Blaming them for problems.

Self-serving bias

Taking credit for events that are successful and denying responsibility when they are not.

Mood bias

Evaluating a situation according to how one feels.

Recency bias

Paying more attention to data that was most recently brought to your attention.

2. Emotional Inventory

Many people cannot respond when asked what emotions they feel. They often refer to what they think or what they want. However, there is a separate truth inherent in emotions – one that cannot be apprehended except through the open acknowledgement of the emotion. As soon as we begin to recognize and name our emotions, a whole new world opens up in front of us. Emotions are integral to learning, and if we cannot name them, this will inhibit our ability to learn, change and grow.

From the following list of emotions, identify which ones you tend to feel in your everyday life; categorize them into those that you experience a lot (high frequency), those that you experience occasionally (medium frequency) and those you experience rarely (low frequency).

Emotion	Frequency (High, Medium, Low)	Emotion	Frequency (High, Medium, Low)
Happiness		Anxiety	
Calmness		Fear	
Contentment		Boredom	
Relaxation		Frustration	
Excitement		Anger	
Optimism		Disgust	
Curiosity		Sadness	
Hope		Stress	
Joy		Depression	
Interest		Pessimism	
Puzzlement		Guilt	
Peace		Envy	
Love		Jealousy	
Warmth		Contempt	
Generosity		Regret	
		Hate	
		Coldness	
		Disdain	
		Distance	
		Resentment	

Now, over a period of time (this will require some reflection), complete the following table. I have started the table off, but you will notice that, done properly, this should take a long time to complete. The more detail you go into, the more insights you will gain about your emotional responses. Ideally, this should be done in a journal, but the briefer, table format is a good start!

Frequency	Emotion	Context – circumstances in which emotion is experienced
High experience of emotions	Hope Optimism Frustration Anger	<p>Hope: I often feel hope as I am leading a big change project and I believe it's going to make a big difference. I feel hope particularly when I am giving presentations to people and when I talk to senior management who are 100% behind me.</p> <p>Anger: I often feel anger, particularly when I talk to people in the customer service department. They don't have a clue about what I am trying to do and what's more, they don't seem to care.</p> <p>I also feel angry when . . .</p> <p>Optimism . . .</p> <p>Frustration . . .</p>
Medium experience of these emotions	Happiness Puzzlement Interest Curiosity Stress Pessimism	<p>I feel curious when I talk to Charles; he's interesting and has an unusual perspective on things. I think I can learn a lot from him.</p> <p>I get stressed with all the work I am getting and when I have to work at home.</p>
Low experience of these emotions	Joy Disgust Sadness Depression	<p>I don't experience joy much at all. The last time I experienced this was when I was working with my old team and we clinched the deal with ROOTco. Also, when Grace was born.</p> <p>Sadness: I don't really feel sad in my life. I do get sad when I think of the type of world my kids are growing up in. I also get sad when I see people wasting their lives, when they have so much to offer.</p>

Now explore what these emotions are trying to tell you. For example, if you experience a lot of boredom, it may be that you dismiss this on a day-to-day basis. You shrug it off as ‘inevitable when you reach middle age’ and then forget about it. Actually, your boredom is probably telling you something quite profound about your life, and it may be that you are frightened of exploring what that truth might be. Typically, people do not explore emotions because they are scared of losing something else that they value or desire. For example, the bored middle-aged executive might really want to set up his own business, but is scared because he fears losing his wife, his wealth, his status and the admiration of his peers. As a result, he does not even entertain the idea. Yet, if he faced his boredom, he could ask a set of more probing questions:

- ‘How could I establish my own business whilst limiting the downside?’
- ‘What does my wife really want in her life?’
- ‘Why am I so obsessed about the admiration of my peers? Actually, there are only two that I really respect and I know they would support my decision.’
- ‘Is it that I am more concerned about how my parents would take it – I’ve always wanted them to be proud of me? Isn’t it about time I grew out of this?’
- ‘How do I want to live my life from now on?’
- ‘Would I regret not trying if I stick to the safe route?’

Try taking one emotion that you feel or sense is important, and exploring its meaning. Write down your thoughts in a journal. This will probably take some time to bottom out, and will be the beginning of an important emotional journey for you.

3. Take One Person

We are surrounded by people. Every person we know generates an emotion in us, even if that emotion is simple indifference. You can learn a lot about yourself, your values and your relationships when

you examine the emotions that different people evoke in you. Try the following exercise.

Choose a selection of people that you interact with. Take each person in turn and describe the mixture of emotions you feel with regards to them. Take time to identify as many emotions as possible. You can go further and explore sensations and thoughts as well.

Now repeat the exercise but with people who have ‘stakes’ in your learning. This includes people who need your input in order to do their work properly and people who are affected by your behaviour and your decisions. This may very well include people with whom you experience conflict and disagreements.

Tony

Admiration. Happiness. Laughter. Warmth. Excitement. Hope. Optimism.

‘He seems to know the way forward.’

‘He seems a kind guy, honest and genuine.’

‘He doesn’t seem a fake. He’s got good relationships with his team and is also a good family guy.’

‘I sense I can trust him; he won’t let me down.’

David

Dislike. Suspicion.

‘He’s only in it for himself.’

‘Obsequious, dishonest, self-interested.’

‘Loves himself, arrogant.’

‘Weak – no integrity.’

‘I wouldn’t trust him as far as I could throw him.’

‘How come he’s got so high in the hierarchy?’

‘What does this say about the people who have promoted him and who work with him?’

Jessica

Indifference. No strong emotions either way.

‘She’s quiet.’

‘I don’t really know her that much.’

‘She’s actually quite important to the team but we take her for granted.’

‘I dismiss her because she’s not extrovert and in your face.’

‘I shouldn’t!’

As in the last example, identify how your feelings for each person affect your relationship – with them, their friends and teams and also amongst your own team and circle of friends.

Challenge your feelings – are they creating self-fulfilling prophecies, are you seeing only what you want to see? Empathize with these people (very much like Rob did when he realized that he had picked up an unwarranted prejudice). See the world through their eyes. Imagine what it must be like to be this person. Articulate your insights – speak them out loud or write them down. Conduct this exercise as if you were someone else looking at you, e.g. what emotions does a colleague associate with you? See if you can change your feelings towards the individual concerned. Ask yourself the following questions:

- On what evidence have I based my emotional reactions?
- What is it that makes me feel this way towards him or her? (identify behaviours, body language, words, image).
- What does this say about me and how I judge people? What does this say about my values?
- How fair is my emotional reaction towards people?
- How is my emotional reaction affecting me, my work, my relationships with others?
- What would it take for me to change my emotional response to this person?

When you have done this for a number of people, ask yourself the following questions:

- What values am I ignoring by dismissing certain people?
- What values am I attracted by?
- What am I afraid of in others?
- How can I develop greater tolerance of others?

The Third Practice – Overcome Defensiveness

We can approach defensiveness from two different vantage points – what to do about my own defensiveness as a leader (to prevent me from generating a defensive culture) and what to do about the defensiveness of those around me.

My Own Defensiveness

1. Recognize your own Defence Mechanisms

We are all defensive; we need to protect our self esteem from the setbacks and failures that experience regularly throws at us. We all have our favourite defence mechanisms. So the first step on the road to self discipline is to recognize your favourite defence mechanisms. Have a go at completing the following inventory. You can get some fun out of this if you do it in a group, laughing good humouredly at each other's characteristic defence mechanisms.

Put a tick against the defence mechanisms you use and show how often you use them. Remember, we all use defence mechanisms at some point, so do not be afraid of being honest with yourself! Analyse the costs of using your favourite mechanism, together with the benefits. Are you using some behaviours that do not really generate many benefits and may possibly lead to more problems?

The Defense Mechanisms Inventory

Type of Defence Mechanism	Not at all	Rare	Often	Very Often	Cost/ Benefit
Denial Refusing to face unpleasant facts					
Aggression physical and verbal					
Blaming Avoiding responsibility by blaming others					

Type of Defence Mechanism	Not at all	Rare	Often	Very Often	Cost/ Benefit
Flippancy Using humour to avoid serious discussion					
Conformity and Self Censorship suppressing doubts; conforming to the group					
Rationalisation Hiding your emotions behind logical arguments					
Withdrawal Going into your shell; aloof					
Playing Victim Seeing yourself as a victim & not responsible for your behaviour					
Illusion of Invulnerability Belief that you are always right. Exaggerated belief in one's abilities					
Dependency Being self critical to elicit pity from others					
Cynicism Channelling anger, bitterness, disappointment into overly negative assessments of situation/people					

Continued

Type of Defence Mechanism	Not at all	Rare	Often	Very Often	Cost/ Benefit
Stereotyping Classifying people in crude ways and blaming them for problems					
Excuses Denying responsibility					
Harmonization Suppressing conflict; asserting that people's interests are in accordance					
Avoidance Avoiding disagreements, risk or conflict					

2. Recognize what Triggers your Defences

Complete a defence mechanisms diary – in written form or quite simply in your head. Over the next month, be alert to your own defensiveness. Every time you catch yourself being defensive, make a note of what triggered it. Keep these notes and once the month is finished, go back over them and see if you can identify any patterns as to when you become defensive and what type of defence mechanism you use. Are there any patterns in terms of what triggers your defensiveness, or, maybe, who triggers your defensiveness?

Now take some time to explore these defensive patterns. The next exercise will give you a start.

3. Face your Fears and Challenge Them

There is a quotation from a science fiction novel called *Dune*. Like Luke Skywalker in the *Star Wars* films, the hero is trained in the

latest forms of mind and body control. Part of his training includes learning to face and control his fears. Part of this involves reciting the following mantra:

'Fear is the mind killer. Fear is the little death that brings total obliteration. I will face my fear. I will permit it to pass over me and through me. And when it has gone past me, I will turn to see fear's path. Where the fear has gone, there will be nothing. Only I will remain.'

Facing our fear is the only way to overcome its power over us – in fact, it frees us to address the problems that, if we are not careful, will make those very fears come true. Facing fear is the only way to regain control.

Take one of your examples of defensiveness and examine it. Ask yourself the following questions:

- How was I feeling?
- What triggered the feelings?
- What was I thinking whilst I was experiencing the feelings?
- Why was I feeling – angry, hurt, upset . . . ?
- What was I afraid of?
- Was I feeling a threat to something dear to me – my self esteem, my competence, my values, my goals, my interests, my feelings of comfort and control?

Notice how you feel as you raise these questions. What bodily reactions are being stirred – for example, sensations in your stomach, gut, face, throat? These can be signs that defensiveness is being triggered and that some reflection might be required in order to handle the situation.

Now, imagine the fear as something that you wish to get rid of – like a gremlin or a sore or an irritant of some kind. Name it – for example, this is my 'what will they think of me' gremlin. Or, this is my 'I'm afraid this person is better than me' gremlin.

Now imagine yourself dealing with your gremlin in whatever way is best for you. For example, you can acknowledge your gremlin (thank you for warning me about the risks in this situation. I will now handle it better if you go away). You can fight your gremlin (oh no; you are not going to win this time. I know you want me to dismiss this person, but I will look ridiculously defensive if I do this. No, I am going to rise above my wariness of him and behave calmly and rationally). You can call upon an alternative, more rational ‘voice’. For example, if you are wary of someone because you think they are better than you (an extremely common form of defensiveness), you can call upon the inner voice that we talked about in the last chapter – your ‘learning’ voice:

‘I am not going to fall into the comparison trap. I know that we all compare ourselves to others and find ourselves wanting. I know what it is that people appreciate about me; I am just going to enjoy being that person and doing what I do best. I am not going to compare myself to anyone – just perform at my best knowing that people appreciate the genuineness, warmth and honesty that I bring.’

Remember, it is not possible for anyone to be perfect. The more someone tries to be perfect, the more they will have to defend themselves from reality, and hence the more likely they will make a big mistake!

4. Monitor Key Performance Indicators and Discuss in Team Meetings

Identify what is critical to the organization’s success and measure it. Ensure the information is available to others and to your team. Regularly hold team sessions where it is considered normal to celebrate successes and openly confront and deal with problem areas. Make this an opportunity for creative thinking, brainstorming and team building.

Handling Others’ Defensiveness

As a leader you have two roles with regards to defensiveness – preventing it and confronting it. It is surprisingly easy for organ-

izations to succumb to the virus of defensiveness, and once it is in, it is difficult to eradicate.

1. *Be Kind*

When asked the most powerful thing he had learned in the last few years, a senior leader told the audience:

‘everyone is insecure’.

We may not be insecure all the time, but most of us are insecure at least some of the time. Good leaders know this, and know, too, that the power they wield is a potential source of defensiveness in others. No matter how amenable leaders are, there will always be an element of fear in the relationships they have with those who report to them.

So remember this: everyone is insecure. Go out of your way to reassure that you are not a threat; that you are sympathetic, understanding and tolerant. This does not mean that you are a walkover or that you will avoid making difficult decisions in your organization. Nor does it mean that you will eliminate the fear that others have of you; you will simply reduce it. And by reducing it in others, you will cultivate a healthy organizational climate where people can concentrate on the task, because they no longer have to concentrate on their personal survival.

Show you are human – for example, talk about your hobbies, your family and what you did at the weekend. Admit mistakes, past errors and current weaknesses. Enable people to relate to you as a normal human being rather than an aloof power figure. Never underestimate how the power that is invested in you permeates and affects every single relationship you have.

2. *Confront Defensiveness*

Remember, defensiveness in certain individuals can get out of control. Often, these people have psychological issues they need to address. They need to be dealt with, because if they are not, they can affect the whole organization. The one problem that we have when dealing with defensive personalities is that many people are frightened of conflict –

that includes very senior people (who often do not have to deal with conflict because it is suppressed). This is the single most powerful weapon in the armoury of the defensive personality. So:

- Ensure all your managers are highly skilled in performance management; ensure they understand, recognize and know how to deal with defensiveness.
- Whenever defensiveness is encountered, confront the unacceptable behaviour – gently but firmly, e.g. ‘do not shout at me’; ‘I will not talk to you unless you lower your voice’; ‘do not threaten me’.
- Take the defensive individual to one side and have an open discussion; try to get the individual to be explicit about his or her concerns and anxieties. This should be in the style of a coaching or even counselling discussion. It may be that you are able to deal with the situation by adopting a coaching approach.
- Recruit a coach to help. If you decide to do this, ensure:
 - you are explicit with both the coach and the coachee about what outcomes you are expecting from the coaching;
 - you put in place monitors to check that the outcomes are being achieved (e.g. six-monthly peer/direct report feedback processes);
 - if necessary, check that the coach has a counselling background.

If this does not help, you may need to adopt a more directive approach, as described below.

- Be specific, explicit and clear about what you want the individual to do and what you want the individual not to do. This means focusing on specific behaviours:
 - I do not want you to raise your voice to anyone in the team;
 - I want you to pass your client files to Debbie when she asks for them;
 - I want you to be helpful to clients on the phone; this means asking them questions about their concerns, checking that you have understood their concerns correctly, adopting a helpful

tone of voice and being clear about when you will get back to them with an answer.

- Being clear about measures. For example, how will you find out if your expectations have been met?
- Ensure there are consequences for non-compliance, e.g. ‘If you do not do this, I will have to bring HR into the conversation and we will consider disciplinary action’.
- Constantly monitor the situation. Regularly check that the individual is complying with your wishes.
- Offer counselling if necessary.
- Remember there are often deep, complex emotional reasons why someone is defensive. They may not be susceptible to reason because they are acting to meet more emotional needs. You can explain why their behaviour alienates clients, but the defensive individual may not really care about clients. They often have one over-riding need – e.g. control – and all their behaviours are designed to achieve it. Sometimes you need to adopt more directive, ‘power’-based tactics, showing the individual that unless they comply, they will lose control (ultimately by losing their job). Always remember that you are doing this to save and preserve important organizational values.
- Don’t give up. The defensive person relies on the fact that people will tire of confrontation and the energy that this involves.
- Having followed the correct disciplinary procedure, if all else fails, ask the individual to leave.

The Fourth Practice – Deepen Sensemaking

1. Self Assessment

Before you begin to deepen your sensemaking, why not conduct an analysis of where you are at right now?

The Learning Cycle

Are you giving each part of the learning cycle appropriate emphasis? Do you monitor and shift your attention patterns? Do you focus on

and learn from your emotions? Do you manage your emotions in order to learn in a mature and balanced manner (do you gain ‘sophrosyne’ – wisdom achieved through a balance between reason and emotion)? Do you spend time in the sensemaking part of the cycle – taking time out to reflect in a deep and creative way? Do you change your behaviour when necessary? Are you good at adapting your style to the circumstances? Do you step out of your comfort zone?

Your Learning State

Do you find yourself adopting a particular learning state? Think about how often you find yourself in a visionary, adaptive, dissonant or reflective/meditative learning state. What are the implications of this?

Your Listening Practices

How do you listen? Assess how much time you spend in the four listening states:

Listening state	Time spent and people I adopt this mode with	Action
Downloading – putting across what I think. Not interested in diverse views.		
Debating – listening to other views but mainly for their faults or weaknesses.		
Reflective – really listening for what the person believes and feels and why.		
Generative – really listening for how this view fits into the system as a whole. Trying to understand the system as a whole.		

Notes

Drivers

How do your individual drivers affect your learning? Complete the following table.

Driver	Implication	Action
Goals – how do your goals affect your learning? Are you impatient, determined, excited, dismissive, overly focused?		
Values – how do your values affect your learning? Are you inspirational, dismissive, combative, judgemental?		
Self Esteem – how does self esteem affect your learning? Are you avoiding difficult issues, managing your emotions, developing yourself? How are you developing your self esteem? Do you need to develop a bit more humility?		
Psychological Comfort – how do your emotions and needs affect your learning? Are you avoiding painful issues, focusing on areas you feel comfortable with, rejecting difficult views? When was the last time you felt uncomfortable?		
Notes		

Having done this, take time to reflect upon your answers. Are there any conclusions you come to with regards to how you are making sense of your environment? Think about:

- Your focus – are you focusing on the right areas, do you need to broaden or focus your attention?

- Completing the learning cycle – do you get stuck in a certain part of the cycle? Are there areas where you are particularly strong?
- Are you listening in order to learn? Do you use other people to learn from?
- Have you got stuck in a particular learning state, e.g. very visionary but not reflective enough?
- Where and how could you deepen your learning?

2. Learn from Dialogue

In a fast-moving world, the main source of new intelligence, ideas, insights and perspectives will be people. We do not learn from people as much as we could. This is because we judge and dismiss rather than listen and learn. If we are to listen and learn from people, we have to approach our conversations in an entirely different way.

I recognize that it is extremely frustrating to talk to someone who has the opposite point of view from you, and for this reason we are not going to eradicate conversations based on mutual fighting and the battle for influence. However, at times it is important to go into a conversation where the intent is simply to learn. When you do this, you decide that the objective of the conversation is to expand your own living knowledge. Once you have decided that the objective is to learn from the individual rather than influence them, it becomes a lot easier to listen. Use conversations to steal constructs! Just listen to the other person's constructs, mental models, experiences and sensemaking processes. Also . . .

- Read the learning dialogue in Chapter 8, page 148. Gain a sense of how a learning dialogue looks and feels different from a normal dialogue.
- Ensure you are in the right frame of mind for the dialogue. The right learning state for a learning conversation is the reflective/meditative, or sometimes the generative, learning state. A learning dialogue has a slower pace than normal dialogue – you need to have both time and space in your mind. Being in a strong visionary learning state, for example, might hinder a learning

conversation, which requires patience and tolerance. Also, make sure you choose an environment that is conducive to a more reflective, discursive conversation.

- Develop some of the skills and techniques associated with learning dialogues, especially: reflecting back what the individual has just said, checking understanding, probing for the underlying experiences that have led the individual to her conclusions, suspending judgement, focusing on key constructs, sensing how the person is feeling, encouraging them to voice their feelings, spotting the values they use to make sense of their experience.
- Reflect on the conversation. Repeat back what you heard from the individual, trying to represent their view as accurately as possible. Try to see where and how this perspective has emerged from the system. Highlight key constructs from the conversation. How do these fit into your own living knowledge? Can you incorporate them into your living knowledge? Can you spot any dilemmas? If so, how would you best reconcile them? How will your living knowledge change as a result of this conversation? What have you learned about the system?
- What are you going to do as a result of the conversation?

It would be a good idea to attend a course on dialogue. These skills are important elements of successful leadership, and vital for building healthy relationships. Courses on coaching would help develop some of the basic skills, whilst more focused courses aimed specifically at dialogue would impart a degree of expertise.

3. Map the System

We all live our lives within highly complex, multilayered, overlapping systems. You may think of your activity as being confined to a particular geographic region or function or profession, but, ultimately, your activities will have consequences for people outside the world that is represented within your living knowledge.

Often, we have no idea of the consequences of our actions, because we do not understand how the different pieces of the system inter-

link. The only way to overcome this is to gain a more complex picture of the system within which you work – in other words, to visit and talk to participants in the system.

Try and spend quality time with people in a different part of the system. Spend a day out visiting clients with your sales staff; spend a day in the factory or in the shop doing the jobs alongside staff. You will learn a lot about how various systems (finance, marketing, operations, HR) work themselves out in different environments. Visit little-known operations – even if they do not seem to have a very strong connection to your job. Spend some time with an industry expert and catch up with the latest thinking and practice in other companies. Form a consortium of companies facing similar issues to yourself and find out what they are doing in the area. Meet with politicians to discuss areas of mutual interest. Attend conferences. Find people in the system who disagree with you. Listen to their arguments and concerns (don't debate, just listen!). All the time, think about what people are thinking, feeling and doing. Find ways of developing your cognitive complexity by talking to different, challenging or disempowered people who participate in some way in your system. As you are doing this, you will be building networks of people who will help to provide your industry 'intelligence'. Nurture these people and ensure you listen to them in the right state of mind. Even if their insights do not appear to be relevant, note them in some way. It may be that they are experiencing new forces that will only manifest themselves in your part of the system later.

Find out about systems thinking. Bring in consultants who specialize in the area which is most relevant to you. Look at different ways of mapping systems and explore ways of using these maps to aid decision making. In a recent *McKinsey Quarterly* article, it was proposed that management has evolved from an art to a science.¹ What the authors were referring to was the increasing use of IT-based tools to support decision making, and also an increasing reliance on experts. Systems mapping techniques are part of these new decision

¹ Davis, I. and Stephenson, E. (2006) 'Ten trends to watch in 2006'. *McKinsey Quarterly*, July.

support tools; however, face-to-face dialogue will always be the most important source of information and insights into how your systems work in practice.

The Fifth Practice – Engage Creativity

1. Create Time for Generative Thinking

The generative learning state that characterizes creative thinking has to be nurtured. Some organizations, such as Google, manage to encourage this state of mind as part of their corporate culture.² Other organizations arrange time off the job in order to think creatively about their activities. It is difficult to cultivate creativity when you are focusing on deadlines and financial targets; that is not to suggest that these things are unimportant, it is simply that creativity requires head space, time and permission to dream and play.

Think about how you can create time for generative thinking. Creativity often arises from interplay with diversity, so is best done in groups or in conversation with others. Find a consultant who specializes in creativity to advise you as to how you can encourage creativity, generate creative ideas and embed creativity into your organizational culture.

2. Ask Creative Questions

Senge refers to a *creative tension* that arises when a vision of the future is juxtaposed with the state of current reality. It is all too tempting when encountering dilemmas, problems and obstacles to abandon the vision or to simplify the problem. Simplifying the problem helps, because an action can then be devised that will seemingly resolve the issue. However, more often than not, this addresses the symptoms rather than the underlying causes. One way in which we can resolve these creative tensions is to ask creative questions.

² 'Chaos at Google.' *Fortune* (Europe edition), October 2, 2006, 154(6).

As we saw in Chapter 8, examples include:

- Both . . . and questions – how can we encourage *both* risk-taking *and*, at the same time, respect values around risk avoidance?
- Connection questions – how are problems a, b and c connected?
- Brainstorming questions – how many ways can we find to . . . or how many options can we generate . . . ?
- Hypothetical questions – what would happen if (we did the opposite of what we were thinking or if we didn't do anything right now)?
- Dream/visioning questions – what would 'ideal' look like in two years' time?

Creativity is often stifled by the frustration that builds in the desire for a quick solution. So it has to be recognized that time is needed when asking and answering these questions. It can feel like you are going off on a tangent, especially if you are strongly goal-oriented. For this reason, it is best to prepare people for creative thinking sessions, ensuring there is time, people are relaxed and the purposes of the session are perfectly clear.

3. Use your People

Creative People

Some people are just more naturally creative. Sometimes they will not be the most practical of people, and this can be highly frustrating for task-oriented, goal-focused leaders. The question is, how can you tap their talents in a way that contributes towards the overall goals and purposes of the organization? This is, in part, about valuing their contributions, despite the fact that their way of working might be very different from yours.

Again, a good starting point is to identify the ideas and talk to the people in a more generative frame of mind. Listen to them, encourage them and let them experiment – within given constraints identified by you.

There is a multitude of systems that encourage both creativity and innovation in organizations. A good way to explore these ideas is to engage a consultant who specializes in this area, and to belong to a consortium of organizations who are good role models or who are trying to improve their own organizational innovation.

Tap the Creativity of All your Employees

There are some wonderful processes that help you to tap the creativity of *all* your people. Scenario planning is one such system that helps large groups of employees envisage and enact potential futures.³ Future search is another such system that helps people take a step back from their current situation, put it in perspective, envisage a positive and empowering future and take steps to enact it. The more people that are engaged in identifying and connecting with the future direction of the company, the more grounded the vision and the easier it is to enact.

The Sixth Practice – Reality Check

1. Regular Reviews

This book has focused on how easy it is to avoid reality. So how do we ensure that we are truly facing reality? And how do we ensure that it is the right reality as opposed to the comfortable reality? These are questions that need to be raised by you and your people on a regular basis. Typically, you will be asking:

- What are our goals? Do our goals challenge us and keep us up to date? What do other stakeholders think our goals should look like? Do our goals reflect the interests of a range of stakeholders?

³ See Ringland, G. (2006) *Scenario Planning*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd. For information on future search, see www.futuresearch.net.

- What do we need to measure – are we getting good, solid feedback to measure our progress, especially in some of the really difficult areas? Are our measures both soft and hard?
- What are we measuring – are we measuring what is easy and avoiding what is difficult? How relevant are our measures in relation to our goals?
- Are we tracking competitors, new entrants into our market, new technological developments and underlying changes in our markets?
- Do our measures challenge us? Do they bring in the perspectives of people we would rather not listen to – for example, environmentalists, institutional investors, competitors?
- How are we interpreting our feedback? Do we minimize difficulties and focus on only the good news?

If we do not bring in hard and soft evidence, it is too easy to reassure ourselves and see everything as ‘fine’. It is difficult to create that sense of urgency or Samsung’s culture of ‘perpetual crisis’, that drives innovation and risk taking. If we do not measure the right things, we can cultivate a culture of complacency, even though, whilst we are pursuing our goals, it may not feel like it.

It is worth taking time out to examine some of the challenges associated with your reality checking processes.

2. Spend a Day

One way to check reality is by spending a day with staff. It is easy to forget the realities of delivering a service or manufacturing products on a day-to-day basis. Figures may tell you one thing, but you cannot beat being there on the ground with the people involved in the delivery. Every director of Tesco’s has to spend time working as a general assistant in the stores. Every week Sir Terry Leahy, Tesco’s CEO, visits a competitor’s store, talking to staff and customers. Of

course, we saw with Sir Richard Greenbury that visiting competitors does not necessarily cure complacency – we do only see what we want to see – but, done in a learning frame of mind, this ‘back to the floor’ type of exercise is one of the most powerful ways of checking reality.

3. How Do You Know?

When relying on facts, opinions and ideas regarding forthcoming decisions, ask yourself ‘how do I know these are true?’ When others assert facts and opinions, ask them ‘how do you know these are true?’

Encourage a desire for evidence when it comes to important decisions and influential opinions. It is not enough that people simply draw on their own experience in their own part of the organization. Whilst this may generate useful insights, it does not necessarily apply throughout the organization. Encourage your people to support their views with evidence – this can be anecdotal, soft evidence (based on surveys and opinion polls) or hard evidence based on different forms of data. Hard evidence does not outweigh soft or anecdotal evidence. Anecdotal evidence may signal a shift or a change that is not yet apparent throughout the system. However, we do have a tendency to generalize on our personal experience, so it is important to seek out supporting evidence – soft, hard and anecdotal.

But balance scepticism with receptivity. It is easier to dismiss important, challenging evidence than it is to accept it. Think about the implications of the evidence if it were true. If someone is suggesting that there is a new trend which implies a lot of change, ask yourself ‘if this is true, what are the implications?’ Then, go out of your way to check the evidence – on the ground, with competitors, with clients – and come to your own point of view. So that when someone asks you ‘how do you know?’ you have a range of statistics, stories, examples and illustrations to support your opinion.

The Seventh Practice – Change your Behaviour

1. Map your Comfort Zone

To help people accelerate their learning, and in particular to take risks with their behaviour, it is helpful to get them to map their comfort zone. This helps them become aware of when they are spending time inside the comfort zone and when and why they might need to step outside of it.

First, draw a large circle. This is your comfort zone. Now, put inside the circle all the elements that seem to fit. Think of:

- preferred paradigms – areas where you feel comfortable and in control;
- people you like to spend time with;
- activities you enjoy and are good at;
- places you like to be;
- values you feel comfortable with.

Now draw a series of rings on the outside of your comfort zone. Place in each ring paradigms, activities, people and places that you are less comfortable with. The more discomfort you feel, the further away from the original comfort zone you should place them.

Now take an item outside your comfort zone. What do you need to do differently in order to move it closer towards the centre? Take time to brainstorm all the ideas that occur to you. Once you have done this, put together an action plan, with goals, steps and milestones. Now implement it!

Remember, when you are venturing outside your comfort zone, do not be hard on yourself; indulge yourself with rewards. Change and learning are both exhausting. It might be good for business having a culture of perpetual crisis, but I am not so sure it is good for the individual to be living in a perpetual crisis! Get a coach; go on retreat; spend weekends away with the family; spend a day at a health farm. It is vital that you look after yourself physically, emotionally and

mentally. Whatever helps you to relax, make sure that you do it frequently and regularly.

2. Regularly Step Outside your Comfort Zone

Practise stepping outside your comfort zone. Whenever you come across a challenge that you have never undertaken before, do it! Join an acting class, learn how to dance, make a presentation in a different style, do an abseil for charity. Whenever someone suggests you do something and you feel that sense of nervousness, take that as a sign that this is something you ought to do!

On a smaller scale, make sure that you try and practise ‘changing your behaviour’ every day. In part, this is about strengthening your willpower. Don’t simply react in response to your feelings or desires; strengthen your will and resist a bar of chocolate or a glass of wine. Force yourself to make the first move in resolving a conflict. Walk to work instead of driving. Regularly find small ways to strengthen your willpower and change your behaviour.

3. Make Behaviour Change an Ongoing Part of your Management Development Strategy

Assignments and new roles should be regularly appraised in terms of how much behaviour change they demand. Executives should expect to have to change their behaviour when encountering these challenges, and should be trained in the skills associated with it. Eventually, behaviour change should be considered natural and inevitable; executives should be trained in the ‘meta’ skills of learning how to learn and change.

4. Provide Both Support and Challenge – For Yourself and Others

Sometimes change just takes time. As we have seen, a person is more likely to change when the discomfort associated with the present

appears greater than the discomfort associated with change. Once the pain associated with the current situation pervades your whole life, bringing inescapable tensions and anxieties, the risks of change diminish. Anything is better than staying in the present situation. But it does take time for the discomfort to grow and for the realization that the pain is not going to go away.

When leading change, it is important to ensure people realize that you mean it – keep up the pressure until people realize that the pressure will not go away. Ratchet up the discomfort, but also provide support to enable people to collectively and positively make sense of what is happening to them. Also, provide training and development to help people take the first experimental steps.

If leaders have blind spots and are refusing to change, there is a range of methods to encourage them to take the first steps, again coming under the rubric of support and challenge. Coaching, of course, can provide both support and challenge. 360° feedback is another source of challenge. Leaders throughout the organization have to know that they cannot escape the discomfort of change – that it is going to affect them, their roles, their people, their jobs, their security, their bonuses. All of the usual paraphernalia associated with change management is applicable here.

If the leaders are at the top of the organization, it is very difficult to dislodge them from the comfort zone. The tactics below might help to highlight the *need to change*:

- Speakers at conferences that challenge leaders, e.g. looking at what competitors are doing, examples showing how markets are changing.
- Company surveys giving feedback on how clients and employees see the company's performance, and reasons for this.
- A 'back to the floor' exercise where the Chief Executive visits factories, plants, clients, retail outlets – both their own and those of benchmark companies.
- An awayday, led by an external facilitator, where the Chief Executive and the board can face uncomfortable issues in a safe environment.

- A yearly challenge whereby people declare one area in which they are going to change their behaviour, possibly based on their 360° feedback. They attempt to change their behaviour in the area specified, and people can go online and give them anonymous feedback on their efforts. At the end of the year, a brief survey could be completed to get feedback on how the individual has done. Various rewards could be linked to success!

The Eighth Practice – Nurture Integrity

1. Weekly/Monthly Reflection

This exercise is inspired by a Benedictine reflection that helps to aid ‘confession’.⁴

Find a peaceful time at the end of a day or week when you can reflect honestly and openly on the following questions.

- Have I been proud or conceited? Do I hate some people?
- Have I dismissed people who have tried to help me?
- Have I ignored people who have tried to bring something to my attention?
- Have I been ungenerous?
- Have I been stubborn?
- Have I been uncooperative or ungrateful with people who are trying to help me?
- Have I been irritable, sulky, jealous or angry?
- Have I avoided someone who has needed my help?
- Have I failed to speak out against things I know to be wrong for fear of becoming unpopular?
- Have I prevented justice from being done?
- Have I told lies to get myself out of trouble or to make myself appear better than I am?
- Have I refused to apologise when I hurt someone?
- Have I said unpleasant things about other people?
- Have I bullied people or used them for my own purposes?

⁴ *Saint Benedict’s Prayer Book for Beginners* (2006), fifth edition. York: Ampleforth Abbey Press.

Do I make friends with people simply because they have power, influence or reputation?

Have I led others to do something which I know is wrong?

Do I live only for myself or do I have higher ideals that I am trying to strive for?

Now, obviously, the purpose of a confession such as this has traditionally been to repent, atone and receive forgiveness. If one believes in a God (from whatever religion or in whatever form, such as 'a higher being'), this is easier to do than if one is an atheist. However, the process of being forgiven is as important as the process of repentance. Without forgiveness, unacceptably high levels of guilt can accumulate, leaving the individual with a low sense of self worth. If you are an atheist and wish to occasionally reflect on these questions, find your own way of making atonement and seeking forgiveness. This could take the form of making reparation to the people who you may have wronged. Perhaps the hardest thing for us to do is simply to say 'sorry'. Find the person you have wronged and apologise – you will find this a lot harder to do than you might anticipate! If it is not possible to make direct reparation, find other ways to atone, such as giving generously to a relevant charity. Sometimes it is good to 'confess' to a friend – just openly admitting you have been wrong can relieve you of the sense of guilt.

When you have reflected on this, try another reflection:

Find a peaceful time at the end of a day or week when you can reflect honestly and openly on the following questions.

Have I been kind?

Have I expressed appreciation of people?

Have I gratefully accepted help from people?

Have I gone out of my way to listen to people who have tried to bring something to my attention?

Have I been generous?

Have I changed my mind in response to someone else's opinion?

Have I been positive, open and grateful to others?

- Have I helped someone recently without any expectation of benefit for me?
- Have I expressed courage in speaking out against things I know to be wrong?
- Have I helped ensure justice has been done?
- Have I told the truth, even though it might have got me into trouble?
- Have I apologised when I hurt someone?
- Have I said pleasant things about other people or brought the helpful actions of others to the attention of their bosses?
- Have I really attempted to listen to people, even though I might have been irritated by them?
- Have I made friends with people who do not have power, influence or reputation?
- Have I led others to do something which I feel is right, even though there has been risk to me?
- Have I said 'thank you'?
- Have I, in some way, lived out my higher ideals?

It is important to balance the recognition of our good behaviour and the acceptance of our faults. If we focus on one to the exclusion of the other, it can cause blind spots to develop (not seeing our faults) or unacceptable levels of guilt and low self worth. This exercise is particularly important for those in positions of power. When in power, it is unlikely that others will point out our faults, so we have to ensure that we do this ourselves. If we do not, we can be lulled into a false sense of security, which may lead us to abuse our power without being aware of it.

2. Define your Goals and Values

Take time out to discover your goals, motivational values and idealistic values. A table of values is provided to help stimulate your thoughts. Some of these values will be motivational values for you (they are part of your personality and come naturally to you), some will be idealistic (you believe they are worthwhile and, although you find them difficult, you strive to achieve them). This list is not intended to be exhaustive!

What's important to you?

Achievement	Action	Affiliation	Assertiveness
Authenticity	Authority	Beauty	Belonging
Caring	Challenge	Change	Citizenship
Commercialism	Community	Compassion	Competition
Conformity	Convention	Courage	Creativity
Democracy	Discipline	Diversity	Duty
Efficiency	Empowerment	Enjoyment	Entrepreneurialism
Environmentalism	Equality	Excellence	Fairness
Family	Fitness	Flexibility	Forthrightness
Freedom	Friendship	Giving	God
Happiness	Harmony	Helping	Honesty
		Others	
Honour	Humanitarianism	Humility	Humour
Impact	Inclusion	Independence	Individuality
Influence	Innovation	Integrity	Justice
Kindness	Knowledge	Leadership	Learning
Logic	Love	Loyalty	Making a Difference
Mastery	Meaning	Moderation	Modesty
Nurturance	Obedience	Openness	Order
Patience	Peace	Perfection	Personal Growth
Pleasure	Possessions	Power	Pragmatism
Prestige	Principles	Recognition	Relaxation
Risk	Security	Self	Self Sacrifice
		Actualization	
Sincerity	Social Inclusion	Spirituality	Status
Strength	Survival	Team Spirit	Tolerance
Tradition	Trustworthiness	Truth	Understanding
Wealth	Wisdom		

Now write down your goals (and what drives your goals), your motivational values and your idealistic values. Can you spot any areas of synergy or tension? Assess your integrity quotient – to what extent are you acting in alignment with your idealistic values? To what extent are you allowing your goals and motivational values to dominate your idealistic values?

My assessment

Goals – identify what you want to achieve. Then ask ‘why’ do you want this? When you ask why you will identify deeper goals and underlying needs and values.

What is really important to me is succeeding in my career. I want to get as high as I can in the organizational hierarchy.

Why do I want this . . . ?

I think one reason why this is important to me is that I need visible signs of success. These signs give me confidence that I am valued and that I have something to contribute.

I know I need to be recognized by others. I can’t just do a job for the sake of it.

Motivational values – what values motivate me?

Recognition, status, loyalty, leadership, order, tradition.

Idealistic values – what values do I strive to achieve but find difficult?

Fairness, justice, family.

Integrity quotient – to what extent am I prepared to sacrifice my goals, needs and values for the sake of others/the organization? – to what extent do I walk the talk?

I’d give myself 5 out of 10. I’d like to aim for a 7!

Give yourself a mark out of 10

Notes:

I didn’t realize that ‘family’ was an idealistic value, but it is! I talk about it but I don’t do much to show how important it is to me. This is because I spend too much time devoted to my career goals and motivational values. I am going to change this. From now on, I will devote my weekends to spending time with the children and with my partner.

When you have finished this exercise, you can, if you are brave enough, seek feedback from others as to how they see you! This will give you some idea of how you are viewed in terms of your integrity.

3. Expand your Range of Values

Take one of your preferred values. Identify a value which appears to challenge it. For example, if your preferred value is loyalty, take a value such as 'challenge'. Now think of circumstances when 'challenge' might be appropriate. Identify someone you know who embodies this value. Talk to them and learn about what motivates them, why they think this value is important and what they think are some of the problems associated with your preferred value. Learn to appreciate differences in values and continually challenge your own preferences by talking to people with different value sets.

