

# Chapter 1: Cultivating Organic Leadership

## Sharing Power and Responsibility for Continuous Improvement

Organic farmers are learning to master a tremendous challenge: relinquishing the 20th century-acquired habit of controlling pests and fertilizing with chemicals and relying instead on partnerships with predator insects, microorganisms, mammals, and birds for maintaining the best growing conditions. Although chemicals are expensive to purchase and deplete the soil and crops of nutrients, it has been *de riguer* for decades to dump chemicals on crops. “Better living through chemistry,” a variant of DuPont’s motto from 1935-1982, became the mantra for generations who would choose chemicals as the solution for both human and planetary ailments. Similarly, command-and-control, the manufacturing industry’s approach to managing both processes and workers, was universally adopted and remains alive and well today despite decades of hand-wringing by organizational development professionals. Only those industries that rely on knowledge workers have made real progress toward developing a more natural approach to hierarchical relationships in workplace environments.

Because it takes infinite patience to prepare the soil on an organic farm and to ensure the health of the microorganisms that provide the nutrients that produce high quality food, it seems easier to control pests and fertilize with chemicals. It takes forethought and time to design “insectaries” (gardens that entice the insects you desire for controlling the pests your crops will attract), to build birdhouses and grow trees that attract the proper fowl for rodent and insect control, to recycle water and animal waste for reuse. As with chemical farming, it seems easier (and faster) for corporate managers to tell people what to do than devote their time to guiding, inspiring, and mentoring individuals, because it takes infinite patience to allow a person who is new at something to make mistakes, correct their mistakes, learn from them, and grow in their capabilities and talents. Yet humans are the diverse and nutrient-rich soil of organizations, and organic leadership requires dedicated focus on the betterment of others. The pattern integrity that emerges is a powerful structure for organizing human activities.

In order to understand how our beliefs about hierarchy and control have become so entrenched in our mindset, let’s look back at the past few hundred years, a time

during which Western humans in particular have relied upon scientific materialism to control our material surroundings, create more comfortable living environments, and climb higher mountains. René Descartes' description of the world as a predictable, humming clockwork was so enticing that many were inspired to search for the laws behind the king's right to rule and the medieval social caste system. Isaac Newton had trouble accepting this notion of a clockwork universe and he worked diligently to find the force, which is gravity, that powered celestial orbits and other phenomenon.

Even though Newton established gravity as the cause of planetary motion and the speeding up or slowing down of objects on Earth, "determinism" became the established way of thinking about the universe *and* keeping order in society. Determinism states that, because things in the material world seem predictable (based upon the laws of thermodynamics in particular), we have control over everything. Management theories based upon control of people, processes, budgets, and outcomes emerged in an environment where industrial-age technologies, in particular manufacturing, were in need of careful control and management. While machines may obey the physical laws of the universe that Isaac Newton discovered, Nature is a different being altogether and, along with us humans, operates at the quantum level of reality, the non-physical realm where matter emerges from energy and information.

### **Control is an Illusion**

Our desire to find evidence for predictable outcomes is part of our nature as creative beings. Positive predictions, after all, give us hope for better futures. In fact, it is a good thing to imagine what you would like to create and then take the necessary steps to get there. In the business world, all kinds of predictions and forecasts are made each year and projected to both employees and shareholders, primarily regarding financial improvement and percentage gain over last year's budget. Many of these are rooted in our debt-centered economy and reflect the need of companies to exponentially increase their profits in order to reconcile their debt to investors. Predictions based upon the need to continually expand often create problems for managers, most of whom are compensated for their ability to meet expectations and deliver the predicted outcomes.

Managers typically become negatively stressed when budgets and projections are off target, which impels them to enforce even greater controls on staff. Now more than ever, the management systems designed during the industrial age to regulate efficiencies in mechanical processes are not suited for the Conceptual Age.<sup>1</sup> Managers trained to hold fast to their budgets and decision-making authority are not enabling an organic flow of information and resources. Instead of adapting to changing conditions like ecosystems do by working *with* chaos and chance, they make attempts to control situations and people, often with disastrous results.

The roots of our distaste for chance and randomness trace back to Euclid, the inventor of geometry, who lived in the 3rd century B.C.E. Euclid's triangles and circles were limited tools for describing our complexly patterned world and also reflected our need at that stage of human evolution to reduce things to their basic elements in order to understand the mechanics involved. Scientific reductionism, the practice of "reducing" things to their most basic parts in order to understand how things work, begat determinism, the idea that the world is a clockwork made up of all of these parts and that knowing the mechanical details enables predictions and controllable outcomes. This knowledge was incredibly significant in enabling our ability to create large-scale works of art and architecture from the Renaissance through the industrial age of technology and today. Reductionism and determinism as beliefs in how things work were logically extended to the control of humans, and this belief system prevails today in modern corporations where managers who consider themselves forward-thinking in effect covertly control staff through threats of "progressive discipline," essentially a disciplinary action for individuals who have crossed some invisible line and are now just one step closer to the door.

Workers who aren't "behaving" in the eyes of management are revealing an underlying systemic issue at play in the work environment. A plethora of reasons might be explored as to the nature of the offensive behavior, including 1) the person is not connected to a shared purpose; 2) the person sees reality from a different perspective than his/her manager does; 3) the person is reacting from their perspective to the

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<sup>1</sup> According to Douglas Englebart, the shift from the Industrial Age to the Information Age occurred between 1951-1963. From the Information Age to the Knowledge Age: 1971-1983. From the Knowledge Age to the Conceptual Age: 1994-2008.

behavior of another person with a different perspective in a manner that is offensive to management. Regardless of the reasons behind differing reactions to situations, figuring out what is going on and what to do about it is the role of leaders. At the quantum level of reality, the management of individuals through discipline restricts communication and squanders opportunities to mine gold: any employee whose perspective is not being listened to or understood by leadership is like a rich vein of minerals buried beneath a substrata of beliefs that towing the line is more important than understanding perspectives. Organic farmers are continually looking for ways to manage their environments through cooperation with Nature and not by trying to control it.

The opposite of cooperation is competition, as we have commonly defined it since Darwin's time, anyway. The original Greek etymology of "to compete" translates as "to strive together." Competition was redefined as "survival of the fittest" even before Darwin was born, likely due to centuries of lack and struggle born of religious conflicts and wars in Europe. Because of this old belief that survival comes only from struggle, we tolerate competitive, controlling work environments and expect individuals to be capable of overcoming any obstacle in exchange for acquiring the means to subsistence. "Company policy" has become a euphemism for towing the party line and avoiding new ways of approaching challenges and opportunities. This tired *modus operandi* to managing productivity in the workplace does not engage humans with positive feelings of excitement and commitment. People want to be part of something that is special and wonderful, and to feel that their contribution matters. Nothing is more important than that we feel good, as feeling good is what makes us happy and healthy.

### **Unions Were The Only Solution**

Our attempts to control market forces as well as other humans have had questionable outcomes, and in the case of the latter have continually met with resistance and bloodshed. Unions were 20th century workers' response to management control and competition for resources. This separation reverberates throughout most unionized organizations, although the role of unions in the entertainment and construction industries is a different story than in corporations where work is ongoing. Projects like movies and buildings are one-offs, and skilled workers need protection from cheap producers and contractors. In companies where the work is ongoing, unions are a

distraction, a waste of time and resources, and they stifle the flow of communication in real time by placing representatives between management and staff. It's rather more effective to pay people what they are worth. Disgruntled workers generate negative thought waves, which we'll explore further, and discourage customer loyalty.

Endemic turnover and lack of commitment by countless individuals in modern corporations reflects the new reality that no one needs to be controlled and everyone wants to feel important. Increasingly, individuals would rather participate in organic processes that unfold over time and which enable personal growth while doing work for which they have a passion. The interaction costs in organizations with unions or in those that tolerate high turnover is astounding; maintaining shop stewards on staff as go-betweens for management and staff delays response time dramatically, which is known as "speed loss" in information theory, a subject we'll explore in Chapter Four. Similarly, companies with high turnover have a corresponding inertia in "going with the flow" while retraining new workers. Similar to a winery that must replant after fungal root attack and wait five years for new vines to produce viable fruit, you're not moving forward and expanding if you are continually regrouping and rebuilding.

New-edge scientific discoveries of the inner workings of nature and biological organisms (including ourselves), as well as the outer workings of the cosmos and the ways galaxies form and cohere, are driving the necessity for transforming top-down organizational systems into natural hierarchies. By the early 20th century, Einstein's relativity theory and the emerging field of quantum mechanics provided a seemingly opposite viewpoint from Newtonian mechanics of the energy and building blocks of matter. Although it has taken more than a century, now large numbers of humans are contemplating the implications of these amazing scientific discoveries about the interactive qualities of the physical and non-physical (i.e. invisible) world. As humans awaken to the power of their minds, cooperation within and between organizations will be more powerful than ever creative forces for defining the reality we desire.

While physical laws of motion can predict the movement of matter and large celestial bodies, quantum laws predict the possibility that various qualities or states may be expressed, depending upon the intention of the observer. It's easy to control a

machine, but impossible to control a person, flora, fauna, or anything organic. Although you can certainly imprison or entrap living beings, you will get only compliance and not cooperation. The American union movement emerged from both the desire to resist control and from internal competition for resources in the form of wages and benefits.

## **Cooperation is the Key to Successful Evolution**

The majority of modern organizations today are not operating with efficient information flows, slowing the evolutionary path of the organization and its members. Without a shared vision and collective goals, personal agendas prevail and create unnecessary conflict. Compounding the hurdle of holding a shared vision throughout the leadership and management of an organization is the 800-lb. gorilla in the room: Competition.

Cultural and societal beliefs are powerful forces that perpetuate subconscious patterns of behavior. In particular, our beliefs around competition are holding us in a pattern of struggle, both within and between human organizations (familial, social, and professional), cities, states, and nations. The historical reasons behind the emergence and staying power of our beliefs about competition are rooted in Malthusian-born survival-of-the-fittest philosophy, as revealed by Bruce Lipton and Steve Bhaerman in their brilliant book, *Spontaneous Evolution* (Hay House, 2009). They describe the scenario that unfolded in the late 1850's when Charles Darwin's theory of evolution gained prominence over that of Alfred Russel Wallace, a naturalist who "recognized that evolution was driven by the elimination of the *weakest*, while Darwin interpreted the same data to mean that evolution resulted from the will to survive inherent in the *fittest*. The difference? In a Wallacean world, we would *improve* in order not to be the weakest, but in a Darwinian world, we *struggle* to acquire the status of being the best. In other words, had Wallace prevailed, there would be less focus on competition and more on cooperation." (p. 116)

Lipton and Bhaerman point out that evolution as a means to survival is a distortion and misinterpretation of the original Greek intention of competition as striving together. The dictionary definition of "to strive" is "to make great efforts to achieve or obtain something." Amazingly, a plethora of modern scientific findings, proven mathematically by complexity theory, illustrate how species in nature cooperate

internally in order to best utilize external resources and manage internal energy sources. Ecosystems in general exhibit the finest qualities of evolution through cooperation, as each species adapts *epigenetically* to changes in the environment, including the introduction of invasive, non-native species. Epigenetics is a newer field of biological research, of which Lipton is a pioneer, that is revealing the true nature of how we evolve: organically, as influenced by the environment within which we exist. Genetic mutations are not random events, as originally postulated by Darwin, but are instead adaptations to changing conditions that ensure the survival of a species in any given environment.

Later in his life, Darwin struggled with the implications of his theory, perhaps because they were being used to support social engineering projects such as preventing the poor from breeding. In a letter he wrote to a colleague in 1888 (thirty years after the publication of his book *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or The Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*), Darwin lamented “not allowing sufficient weight to the direct action of the environments, i.e. food, climate, etc., independently of natural selection.” The mathematics behind Malthusian philosophy, which influenced Darwin and many others in the European aristocracy to perceive Earth’s fauna and flora as engaged in a downward spiral of struggle for survival, were indeed based upon the dilemma English society found itself in with the expanding population of poor people unable to adequately support themselves as population growth outstripped available resources. As Jared Diamond illustrates in *Collapse*, numerous human settlements and societies have perished as human mismanagement of the environment, coupled with population expansion, seems to support Malthus’s faulty math; however, nature in those same human environments, both before and after human arrival and demise, thrived despite environmental factors as climate change that tipped the balance for the humans. As it turns out, our planet is remarkably adept at balancing the needs of all the organisms within its various ecosystems, except when humans act from entrenched beliefs about the way the world is and how to interact with it. Diamond also illustrates how certain groups of humans have learned to adapt to our environments and sustain societies for millennia.

## **Nature Adapts and Evolves Through Iteration**

All of Nature, even humankind, flows in the direction of greater collective intelligence. Scientists have discovered that ecosystems evolve and survive through the organic process of iteration, or feedback loops, which enables organisms and life forms to adapt to changing conditions. Many successful agricultural societies thrived for thousands of years without the benefit of Monsanto to provide them with exclusive, designer seeds. Modern organic farmers, because they don't rely upon chemical pesticides or fertilizers, must meet pest challenges as opportunities to expand their knowledge of organic practices and how to partner with natural organisms to create optimal environments for their crops. Likewise, organic leaders in human organizations must allow processes to unfold and evolve over time and partner with "things-and-processes" managers (everyone else in the organization) as they navigate new waters, without attempting to control outcomes with command-and-control practices, which are, in effect, like chemical pesticides and fertilizers.

Along with Darwinian myths about the necessity of struggle, we also inherited from scientific materialism the idea that life is a linear process that is deterministic and predictable. It is not. We know this now and in our knowing we are challenged to think differently than before. While planning and budgeting are essential in every organization, the inertia to adapt and re-vision plans and budgets according to environmental change diminishes human creative potential and threatens organizational survival. The Earth has survived and evolved through billions of years of its existence and numerous devastating events, continually building upon that which came before and enabling the creation of newer and more adaptable species. This process of iteration is built into every natural system, allowing evolutionary adaptation while maintaining systemic pattern integrity. Fractal geometry, the foundation mathematics for understanding Nature and the inspiration for the Fractal Organization model I present in Chapter Three, illustrates the patterns that Nature repeats and evolves through time.

## **Pattern Integrity Emerges in Chaotic Environments**

The popular definition of chaos is "mayhem" and implies disorder, primarily thanks to the second law of thermodynamics, which defines chaotic environments as "entropic" and

which devolve and decay over time. Nature, however, creates in states of disequilibrium, also defined in these models as chaos, that produce patterns reflecting a system's integrity. According to evolutionary biologist John Joe McFadden, author of *Quantum Evolution* (HarperCollins Publishers, Ltd, 2000) "Entropy is difficult to define precisely but comes closest to our concept of chaos." (p. 132) At the same time, McFadden reminds us of structures created by entropy-coupled self-organization, termed dissipative structures by Ilya Prigogine, a Belgo-Russian chemist who won the Nobel prize for his discovery. These structures, some of which you'll see in Chapter Three, dissipate entropy, are widespread in Nature, and produce pattern integrity through a continuous flow of energy. Thus, chaos can produce either harmony or discord. Top-down hierarchies often produce *entropy* chaos, which reflects the loss of energy expended through negative human relationships and the resulting lack of coherence in information flows. Such entropic systems reflect the abundance of useless energy through behaviors such as negative gossip and internal competition.

It is the role of leadership in organic companies to maintain a continuous flow of energy that unites the organization through the pattern integrity of a shared vision. When leaders are able to engage the hearts and minds of staff through shared vision and responsibility, staff will take actions toward the greater good of the organization, drive continuous improvements and changes at their functional level, and enjoy every minute of it. The excitement in organizations that operate in this manner is palpable. People can't wait to get up and go to work, to join with their coworkers in making products and serving customers. Everyone wants to feel that their work in the world matters and that they themselves matter. As Barack Obama eloquently stated, "Focusing your life solely on making a buck shows a certain poverty of ambition. It asks too little of yourself. Because it's only when you hitch your wagon to something larger than yourself that you realize your true potential." Organic leaders not only feel responsible for providing opportunities for people to connect to something greater than themselves through collective goals, they also recognize the importance of engaging each mind in the organization. Because, as it turns out, we're all rather entangled.

## Entangled Minds and the Observer Effect

As noted by Louisa Gilder in *The Age of Entanglement: When Quantum Physics Was Reborn*, “The motions of subatomic particles are dominated by entanglement. It starts when they interact; in doing so, they lose their separate existence. No matter how far they move apart, if one is tweaked, measured, observed, the other seems to instantly respond, even if the whole world now lies between them.” (Knopf 2008)

Entanglement theory describes the interconnectedness of things. Physics experiments in enormous underground particle accelerators provide the setting for scenes most of us can hardly envision. Physicists have figured out a way to separate previously connected particles by great distances and then stimulate one of the newly separated particles with a flash of light. They then measure how the other half reacts, the remarkable thing being that it does and does so instantaneously (faster than the speed of light). Einstein called this type of phenomenon “spooky action at a distance.” It happens naturally among humans and animals. British biologist Rupert Sheldrake, in his book and video *Dogs That Know When Their Owners Are Coming Home* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2002), conducted over 100 video-taped experiments where dog owners, at a random time they didn’t know about in advance, received a phone call telling them to return home. Video cameras operating in the dog owner’s homes documented that *at the very same instant* the owners received the call to return home, their pet dogs went to the door to await them.

In order to measure instantaneous communication among humans, research scientist Dean Radin at the Institute of Noetic Studies (IONS) in Petaluma, Calif., has conducted experiments using fMRI technology to measure brain waves in subjects shielded from electromagnetic energy in separate spaces. The “receiver” in the study sits quietly in a darkened room with his or her cranium wired to brain-wave sensors. The “sender” sits before a computer screen that periodically flashes a picture of the receiver. When the sender sees the picture flash and thinks of the receiver, the fMRI machine records simultaneous flashes of brain wave activity in the receiver. Interestingly, the quality of the subjects’ relationships determines the strength of the signal and the timing of its reception.

Entanglement is related to the observer effect, a concept introduced by Werner Heisenberg in the 1920s, a topic I cover more extensively in Chapter Two. Observers in scenes, or measuring devices in physics experiments, have effects on outcomes through their presence and observation. Many people refer to this as “energy following thought,” a way of describing how we create our realities with our intentions. Contemporary Italian physicist Italo Vecchi ponders: “Maybe certain groups of observers agree more among themselves than with other observers. Maybe there are clusters of observers with different degrees of relatedness. The less they are related, the harder it is for them to agree on what they observe and communicate effectively.” Scientists have illustrated how human hearts and brains produce wave patterns and our bodies emit electromagnetic vibrations, since we are essentially electromagnetic generators of energy.

Though this may seem intuitive to many readers, the institution of business has historically disregarded the thoughts and feelings of employees, resulting in separation between management and staff, endemic turnover, and entropy chaos. Order emerges from chaos when inspired leaders engage their staff in creative improvements and reward their participation. Unfortunately this experience is rare in organizations where personal agendas supersede collective goals, most blatantly through internal competition, which greatly erodes trust.

## **Building Trust**

Human intelligence continually drives us to improve processes and make our lives easier. While the desire to serve others with things that you enjoy creating must come from within, this desire is fostered and nurtured in cultures of leadership. Motivation is inspiration from within, after all. For example, a leader’s commitment when guiding someone who is new to customer service amplifies that person’s ability to get up to speed quickly and even surpass expectations. An essential ingredient in organic leadership skills is building trust, an iterative process that is well understood by Pixar Animation Studios. The makers of such blockbusters as *Toy Story*, *Finding Nemo*, *Ratatouille*, *WALL-E*, and *Up!* have a mantra they apply to all their creative efforts: Trust the process.

Pixar leadership well understands iteration: the process of creation and feedback that drives their filmmaking is also at the heart of a software tool they built to make their films: RenderMan. Underlying the technologies that make up RenderMan are a class of algorithms based upon fractal geometry, which illustrates how Nature evolves through feedback loops. In the process of making their incredibly successful animated films, Pixar directors and artistic teams tolerate multiple iterative developments of the scenes they create and eventually render into digital output. With a shared vision for the outcome of each new film project, directors encourage staff to throw every idea they have onto a table, or a wall, no matter what. They know intuitively that this rigorous process of brainstorming leaves no rocks unturned, no unmined gold in the hills and valleys of the brains they employ. Though the volume of information this process generates is high, dealing with the information is simple: map it to the vision and see if it fits. This process of encouraging everyone to participate within their functional area of expertise is actually what builds trust, because each individual is allowed to be who they are and participate in ways that are personally inspiring. They feel trusted to participate.

Trust in most relationships evolves over time. We are complex, diverse individuals with personal ideologies constructed from lifetimes of unique experiences. Trust is built upon integrity, which is the ability to tell the truth, make and keep agreements, walk your talk, and so on. While the desire for more integrity is thankfully growing in our society, many individuals still find it hard to maintain personal integrity in certain situations. Building trust through integrity requires making agreements, which I'll discuss more extensively in Chapter Six. Agreements must be the foundation for conversations and honored by all who make them together, though amendments are naturally expected and are part of the iterative process. When conditions change, agreements change, but organic leaders always keep their agreements because, if you break an agreement without renegotiating amendment first, you jeopardize trust. And it is nearly impossible to rebuild trust from a broken agreement. Don Miguel Ruiz, in his best-selling book *The Four Agreements*, calls this "being impeccable with your word." Words have power, much more than we like to admit. Often individuals make superficial agreements just to get along. Written and signed collective agreements are a better approach to making decisions, as we are reticent to sign things we don't really believe

in. This process ensures that individuals will consciously participate and selects out team members who do not buy into the vision: when agreements are the foundation for the work, those who won't make and keep agreements will be encouraged by their team members to find work that is more interesting to them personally.

With a foundation of mutual agreements, direct communication, and leadership integrity, you can build trust in your organization and sleep easier at night. Organic farmers trust the ladybugs and hummingbirds, the hawks and geese, and the microscopic organisms working toward win-win outcomes for themselves and the farm. Nature does this naturally, based upon survival instincts, but humans need a greater purpose than just organizational survival. In addition, we've developed ingrained patterns of fear and distrust through centuries of strife, warfare, economic fluctuations, and environmental disasters. Yet, the opportunity is ripe for shifting patterns of trust in the workplace as a model for global change. Because corporations gather more diverse individuals than any other world institution, they are ideal incubators for new ways of thinking. New leadership models that build trust in the workplace can profoundly influence human relationships in families, communities, and nations.

## **Redefining Leadership Success**

In today's fragmented collectives of corporate kingdoms and their scattered fiefdoms, efficiencies are somewhat superficial; the invisible waste in high interaction costs and missed collaborative opportunities can hardly be measured. Nor can the time and energy spent competing internally for resources be utilized for gaining and serving customers in the marketplace. Human organizations need leaders who are conduits of energy and information flows, who continually advocate the collective vision while directing the full participation of each individual on their team. This is a remarkably new model of leadership in which leaders are akin to the nervous system of our bodies, responsible for acquiring and processing information from the environment and directing appropriate action. The *managers* of things, processes, and relationships are everyone in the organization who is *not* a leader. Through inspiration, guidance, and mentoring, leaders delegate all functional and analytical tasks to their managers and trust them to deliver. It is kind of like letting go of the reins and simply enjoying the ride.

Organic leadership is riskier yet ultimately more satisfying and successful. It helps to let go of old concepts of control while at the same time driving the development of parameters and guidelines for ongoing change and evolution. Leaders who insist on making detailed agreements in the planning process, for either functional or project work, teach their managers the importance of using agreements as the foundation for conversations. When agreements are made in alignment with the collective vision, conversations can afford a variety of viewpoints because leaders will *a/ways* be there to facilitate an outcome that coheres with the group vision. This is not a trivial task, and leaders who wish to play this facilitative role need training and mentoring themselves.

Yet the rewards are great, both for individuals and companies. Organic leaders put their functional and project teams in charge of solving problems and creating solutions for continuous improvement (at their level of responsibility) that are aligned with the group's shared purpose. They also must communicate their team's ideas and perspectives to the leadership roundtable of which they are a part and from which they receive guidance and inspiration for carrying on with the shared vision (more on this in Chapter Eight). This vision thing, the constant in fractal geometry and the attractor in structures that dissipate entropy, is *the* most critical component in cohering group efforts. Sharing the vision is a daily task at every scale in the organization, from central leadership to all leaders positioned throughout the organization's nervous system. Leaders focus on holding the vision as it evolves with the organization; they facilitate the expression of everyone's perspective on potential solutions and new possibilities, and they spend time pondering future directions for continuous improvement. They cultivate passion for the collective vision and win-win collaborations. They feel pride and joy assisting their team's efforts, yet they know when to take the back seat. They compensate in proportion to the value delivered. And, perhaps most importantly, they act as conduits of information flows, as in the nervous system, from their managers to central leadership, where synergies throughout the organization for continuous improvement and change initiatives can be gathered and synthesized for planning resource allocation across the organization.

Cultivating organic leaders is not trivial work or more human organizations would operate in this manner. Similarly, making the shift from pesticide to organic or bio-

dynamic farming is time-consuming and expensive. But what are your choices? One is to keep struggling with outdated management systems that produce systemically entropic issues such as internal competition, lack of shared intelligence, turnover, and toxic stress. The other is to wake up and realize your most important task is to get all the brains in your organization working toward continuous improvement in alignment with your collective goals.

Unless you change your measure of leadership success, your organization will never benefit from the knowledge and resources sequestered in divisional silos. Working at cross purposes raises your interaction costs (a euphemism for doing less with more people) while reducing your ability to adapt to changing conditions. In order for leaders to operate organically, you need a system that rewards it. Fractal organizations (described in detail in Chapter Three) are iterative and continuously evolve through the creative participation of everyone, unlike conventional hierarchies that breed entrenched and defensive managers.

Being a fractal, organic company means redefining leadership as inspiration, guidance, and mentoring in an environment of open participation and shared purpose. Rewarding leaders when their teams make innovative changes dilutes fear of other's ideas. Setting standards of leadership that include attributes such as generosity of time and sponsorship of other's growth provides guidelines for managers considering the leap to leadership. Ultimately, organic leaders are defined by the excellence they inspire in their teams and in each individual, at whatever level each may achieve. Compare the flavor of organically and conventionally grown produce. There's a qualitative difference.

### **Sidebar: Organic Leadership Attributes**

**Generosity of Time:** Spend more time talking with individuals and strategizing with teams and less time doing functional and analytical tasks.

**Problem-Solving:** Engage the imaginations of staff in solving their own problems rather than waiting for a leader to fix them.

**Intuition:** Develop confidence in your own intuition. Trusting yourself is key to not letting others convince you of false arguments or limiting beliefs.

**Authority:** “What we need for leaders are men of the heart who are so helpful that they, in effect, do away with the need of their jobs. But leaders like that are never out of a job, never out of followers. Strange as it sounds, great leaders gain authority by giving it away.” Admiral James B. Stockdale

**Tolerance:** Allow all viewpoints to be heard and beliefs to be acknowledged, yet insist on decisions that align with the vision.

**Shared Vision and Purpose:** Unify individuals within a collective purpose. You must have shared vision, or personal agendas will rule the day.

**Agreements:** A foundation of making, keeping, and amending agreements enables direct communication and diminishes gossip.

**Respect:** Organic leaders recognize that all humans are equal and have a right to be here. Leaders respect where individuals happen to be on their personal development path and know that every job is important for successful outcomes.

**Imagination:** Spend more time thinking about the possibilities of where your future expansion takes you and your team. Envision individuals expanding their roles, taking on more responsibilities, and driving continuous improvement. Imagine how great that makes you feel, because you enabled and encouraged that expansion.

**Mentoring:** Also known as sponsorship or coaching, mentoring another’s growth and development ensures their emotional commitment, and it feels good, too.