

Bellwether: noun;

A wether, or other male sheep, that leads the flock, usually bearing a bell; a person or thing that assumes the leadership at the forefront, as of a profession or industry; a person or thing that shows the existence or direction of a trend .

(All quotes listed are by Dr. Lance Secretan unless otherwise noted.)

Chapter 5 – From Engagement to Inspiration

- **The Employee Engagement Paradox**

- “Employee satisfaction typically measures the level of “happiness” experienced by employees with their working conditions, while engagement attempts to measure the level of discretionary “passion” they are prepared to invest in their work.”
- “In the 1990s, Gallup developed the first iteration of their famous Q12 Survey, so named because it contained just 12 survey questions. It has remained the gold standard in measuring employee engagement, a broader measure than employee satisfaction, because it attempts to measure the level of discretionary energy and emotional commitment an employee is willing to invest in the organization.”
- “There is scant research supporting engagement as a key contributor to corporate performance, but much research showing that successful companies have more engaged employees!”
- “...engagement surveys become a way for human resource professionals to demonstrate that they are doing ‘something strategic’.”
- “Although often dressed up differently, engagement surveys are typically deployed as a means to improve organizational performance, not enhance the lives of employees.”

- **The Employee Is the New Customer**

- “If we need to prioritize at all, we might put the employee as the top priority, because if we inspire employees, they will inspire customers—and, of course, everyone else. Therefore, the employee is the new customer. This is how Virgin, Southwest Airlines, Starbucks, The Boston Beer Company, The Container Store, EllisDon, HCL Technologies,³⁷ New Belgium Brewing, and others have become extraordinarily successful.”
- “Ma recently painted a vivid image of his ideal work environment for Alibaba’s employees as follows:
 - Blue Sky: Processes, systems, and decisions need to be open and transparent. There’s nothing that should be hidden from employees. We should be transparent.
 - Solid Ground: Everything we do should be honest, ethical and contribute to the welfare of the society. The company should be on solid financial ground so employees won’t worry about the financial future of the company.
 - Free-flowing Ocean: Talent must be allowed to rotate jobs across subsidiaries and departments.
 - Green Forest: Conducive conditions for continued innovation.
 - Harmonious Community: Peers with shared values and simple interpersonal relationships.”
- “Bureaucracy, secrecy, and stagnation are all attributes that inhibit employees, and the company must actively seek out these behaviors and destroy them.”

- **The CASTLE® Principles**

- “...let’s agree that checking in with each other is not a semi-annual or annual chore (more on this in the next chapter). It is an ongoing dialogue (dialogue: noun: an exchange of ideas or opinions on a particular issue) in which we learn, grow, and inspire.”

- “Deep questioning in regular dialogues requires questions of substance that pertain to the quality of relationships and how inspiring they are, because, as we have noted in Chapter 2, peak performance—at work, or anywhere else for that matter—depends on loving and inspiring connections and relationships.”
- “...using the “Truthfulness” principle of the CASTLE® Principles, for example, we might want to ask:
 - *Does your leader tell the truth?*
 - *Do you feel safe to tell the truth?*
 - *Does your organization tell the truth?*
- “The point is to work toward a new condition in which my leader does tell the truth, regardless of how our data compares to others—thus changing a relationship from a demoralizing one to an inspiring one.”
- “...as a leader, I am principally concerned with how my team members feel about their leader, their organization, and their work life, and if any of these, and other relationships, are not inspiring and top-notch, I want to take any action I can to improve the situation.”
- CASTLE® Principles
 - COURAGE: I see courage modeled every day by our leaders; I am brave enough to ask the difficult questions at work.
 - AUTHENTICITY: Our organization’s strategies and actions are in line with our core values; I am completely free to be myself at work.
 - SERVICE: My leader actively supports me in achieving my personal aspirations and dreams; My work fills my life with meaning and fulfillment.
 - TRUTHFULNESS: Truthfulness is honored as a top priority in this organization; I tell the truth in everything that I do at work.
 - LOVE: I feel cared for and loved at work; When I win, no one else loses.
 - EFFECTIVENESS: My work makes an important contribution to creating a better world; We are among the best in the world at what we do.
- *“Am I being Courageous? Could I be more Courageous? Am I being Authentic? What would real Authenticity in this situation look like? Am I being of Service? Am I Serving the other? Am I being Truthful? Am I being untruthful by avoiding the Truth? Am I being Loving? Will this person feel my Love during and after this conversation? Am I being Effective? How could I be more Effective?”*
- “...the best way to test the culture of the organization is to engage in frequent, authentic, deep dialogue.”

Chapter 6 – From Performance Appraisals to Constructive Check-Ins

• The Performance Appraisal

- “‘I’m glad we are having this conversation today. I’d like to go over a few things with you, including your key performance indicators, your budget, feedback from your colleagues, and set some objectives for the year ahead’ ... these words are demeaning, insulting, supercilious, one-sided, and offensive.”
- “When how we work, live, and behave is distilled down to a five-point scale, there is no room left for creativity, innovation, fulfillment, meaning, collaboration, and dreams—the juice of inspiring organizations, and families.”
- “Many people see the performance appraisal process as just one more time-wasting, bureaucratic chore that sucks time out of busy agendas and subjects people to an administrative grind that is uninspiring and filled with traps and dangers.”
- “...the annual rating system arouses fear and loathing—it embodies the fear-based management approach... the traditional performance review process made it nearly impossible to develop the

necessary authentic conversations or trusting relationships in the workplace that lead to high performance.”

- “Researchers report that 90 percent of performance appraisals are painful and ineffective and don’t improve performance and 30 percent of them actually ended up decreasing employee performance...”

- **The Values-centered Leadership® Model**

- “...high performance anywhere—in our personal or professional lives—is achieved when we do these three things exceptionally well:
 - 1. Attain great levels of competence (Mastery)
 - 2. Build deep, inspiring, and enduring relationships (Chemistry), and
 - 3. Serve others (Delivery).
 - 1. Mastery: Undertaking whatever you do to the highest standards of which you are capable
 - 2. Chemistry: Relating so well with others that they actively seek to associate themselves with you
 - 3. Delivery: Identifying the needs of others, and meeting them
- 1. Learning: Seeking and practicing knowledge and wisdom
- 2. Empathizing: Considering the thoughts, feelings, and perspectives of others, and
- 3. Listening: Hearing and understanding the communications of others
- “In order to achieve greater Mastery, we must engage in new Learning. Similarly, if we wish to build greater Chemistry with people, we must first Empathize with them. And meeting the needs of others—Delivery—is best achieved by Listening for those needs.”
- “There is nothing in the world that we cannot do if we learn something new that leads to greater Mastery, empathize with others that leads to greater Chemistry, or listen to the needs of others in order to achieve greater Delivery.”
- “...replace semiannual or annual performance reviews with frequent, inspiring conversations—check-ins.”
- *“Where do you feel we are stuck? Is it Mastery (we are just not good enough at what we do)? Or is it Chemistry (we don’t have very good personal relationships with this customer)? Or is it Delivery (we are not meeting the customer’s needs)?”*

- **The Vector**

- “If you subtract the Primary Value (in this case Mastery at 7) from the Accelerator (in this case Learning at 6), the resulting number is –1. We call this a negative Vector of 1 (Figure 5). It suggests that there is insufficient learning occurring at the present time to achieve the appropriate level of Mastery—a 6 in Learning is not sufficient to sustain a 7 in Mastery.”
 - “What do you think you need to learn in order to achieve greater Mastery?” Notice that this is a nonjudgmental, noncritical, peer-to-peer conversation designed to inform both parties and enable them both to grow—based on questions, not judgments or lectures.
- “The Vector is a forward indicator. Most performance appraisals are snapshots of history, looking back over six or 12 months (backward indicator). ...recognizing that the current situation is simply the result of the past, and, at the same time, acknowledges that we are equally interested in the future.”
- “An early adopter of the commitment to abandoning performance reviews was Cargill, who have found that there has been a measurable improvement after managers began providing inspiring and constructive feedback that was forward looking, instead of reviewing what had happened in the past—a common, and irrelevant, aspect of most performance reviews.”

- **The Portability of Values-centered Leadership®**

- “Another benefit of this methodology is that it can be transferred to almost any activity. A strategic plan, for example, can consist of the three Primary Values and the three matching Accelerators:
 - 1. Mastery: *What do we need to be really good at to achieve this strategic plan? What will we need to Learn to achieve the level of Mastery required?*
 - 2. Chemistry: *Who are the people who will be instrumental in the successful achievement of this strategic plan? How will we Empathize with those people?*
 - 3. Delivery: *Who are the customers for the strategic plan? What do they need? How will we Listen effectively to them to accurately hear their needs?*
- “Customer service check-ins can be handled in the same way—we can ask the customer: •
 - Mastery: *How well do you think we do what we do? What do you think we need to Learn in order to improve our Mastery?*
 - Chemistry: *How good are our relationships and how, and with whom, can we relate better? How, and with whom, should we Empathize more?*
 - Delivery: *Are we meeting your needs? How can we Listen better and more, in order to continually improve the way we meet your needs?*
- “Values-centered Leadership® is a very effective coaching tool, and almost all conversations between leaders and their employees and between coaches and their clients are coaching conversations.”
- **Moving Forward with an Inspiring, Constructive Check-In instead of a Performance Appraisal System**
 - “...tips for reinventing this entire process:
 - 1. Announce a Clear New Direction: Declare your intention to introduce an entirely new approach to inspiring people that will become a system-wide commitment to inspiration.
 - 2. Abolish the Entire Existing System: Don’t tweak.
 - 3. Create a Conversation among Peers. ...let’s build something that aspires to be...: caring, other-centered, and focused on personal growth and development, in tune with personal aspirations as well as corporate objectives...
 - 4. Remove Fear: Make it clear that the purpose of the check-in is not to punish, appraise, evaluate, judge, set compensation, or assess promotional prospects... Make it safe to tell the truth—in both directions...
 - 5. Remove Metrics: ...Leading and inspiring people is an art—and it can be taught. Focus only on metrics that are agreed by each party... all check-ins are personal and growth-oriented, inspiring contribution or solution to challenges, queries, and aspirations.
 - 6. Timing: Eliminate anything “annual” and replace it with frequent (as in daily) check-ins. Inspiring check-ins, not just about challenges or projects, but about dreams, possibilities, goals, and growth, should be frequent, and part of the ongoing relationship between leaders and their employees.
 - 7. Train, Coach, and Partner: ... I define coaching as Inspiring others to grow from where they are to where they aspire to be, seeing through where a person is, to where they can be. Our key role as leaders is to partner with others and coach them
 - 8. Automate: Capturing frequent conversations and check-ins in today’s fast-paced environment can be a hit-and-miss affair unless there are systems available to capture them. A mobile app is an excellent way to do this as it enables leaders to provide feedback anytime and to record it if desired.”
 - “One of the finest ways by which we as leaders help to change the world and make it a better place is by coaching, teaching, mentoring, leading, partnering with and inspiring others, helping them to grow and live to their full potential.”