

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 9 – From War to Peace

- “The power of words is perhaps the most important and misunderstood aspect of human communication. Language is rooted in the most primitive parts of our brain. Researchers believe that humans learned to utter sounds only recently—around 100,000 years ago—by mimicking birds, and later, needing to add dimensions to their communications, borrowing additional sounds from primates.”
- “In business, we have succumbed to a cliché-ridden tribal language that falls into two categories. The first category consists of buzzword clichés... The second category is warrior-speak, where we use violence-laced metaphors...”
- “The buzzword clichés are simply mind numbing, boring, and show that a speaker has a poor grasp of the richness and potential of the English language. Warrior-speak is more problematic because it mythologizes ruthlessness, and this trips the mind and the heart and alters our hard-wired emotions.”
- “Whenever we communicate with each other, we alter our own biochemistry as well as that of those with whom we are communicating—”
- “If all the metaphors we use have their roots in violence and war, we run the risk of creating paranoia and a lack of sensitivity to ruthlessness, leading to heightened stress levels in others. And stress, as researchers have discovered, can lead to long-term changes in the brain’s structure and function, as well as to mental illness.”
- “Words such as “joy” and “love” can bring about changes in our genes, strengthen our cognitive abilities, and stimulate resiliency and the emotional centers of the brain.”
- “...neurochemicals, aroused by the emotions triggered by violent language, interrupt or shut down the brain’s higher cognitive functions (logic, reason, and language), the very mental processing power that is essential to high performance in business.”
- “...warrior-speak raises stress levels, which reduces cognitive skills and the executive functions of the brain—making us less effective as leaders, and as humans.”
- **The Biochemistry of Language**
 - “...the adrenal glands, including cortisol. Elevated cortisol levels interfere with learning and memory, lower immune function and bone density, increase weight gain, blood pressure, cholesterol, heart disease, and interfere with sleep and more. Elevated cortisol levels also increase risk for depression, mental illness, and lower life expectancy and can prompt decreased resilience...”
 - “...employees who are “motivated” by fear take many more paid sick days off than those who are “inspired” by the love for what they do and with whom they do it.”
- **Choosing Oxytocin versus Cortisol**
 - “In humans, oxytocin is thought to be released during hugging, a handshake, touching, cuddling a puppy, and orgasm in both genders—and by the use of positive phrasing. It contributes to relaxation, trust, social recognition, empathy, generosity, social memory, bonding, and psychological stability.”

- **Warrior-Speak**

- *{See end of notes for warrior-speak examples.}*
- "...reprimands, threats, and punishments stimulate negative electrochemical reactions, compared with the positive electrochemical reactions stimulated by encouragement, praise, saying thank you, and behaving with grace."
- "We can be intimidated by the fear or we can rise above it, releasing the appropriate biochemistry necessary to reduce the emotional pain and respond with love."
- "...we can rephrase our communications with a conscious choice to remove negative phrasing and replace it with positive and inspiring phrasing. For example, instead of saying, "No problem" in response to receiving a "thank you" from someone, try, "It was my pleasure" or "You are more than welcome.""
- "As a general guideline, it is always best to ask questions instead of making assertions."
- "All human communications are transmitted and received on a continuum ranging between negative and positive, fear and love."
- "...pain and fear, which releases stress hormones, including cortisol; activates the limbic system and puts the body in "stress mode"; or love and pleasure, releasing oxytocin and the "uppers" that lower blood pressure, heart rate, and oxygen consumption."
- "Since the soul and the body are one, whether we are experiencing love or fear directly influences us to the core of our being."
- "...when we use warrior-speak at work or at home, we cause human depression and stress, which compromises the immune system. This creates a dysfunctional environment, both in our bodies and within our organizations. The result is dis-ease and sickness of the soul."
- "We are drawn to people whose language, communication style, and interaction rely on everything positive."
- "Warrior-speak and cortisol generation is fear- and motivation-based; positive language is love- and inspiration-based. If we want to create organizations that are inspiring, it's important for us to understand the power of both the words and the music—what we say and how we say it—that we use to communicate internally and externally."
- "...if we want to be inspiring, and to inspire others, we need to overhaul our philosophy of language, choose our words carefully, and communicate in peace, not in war. Such a change can transform the culture and reputation of any organization."

Afterword – Why It Is So Hard to Change

- **Paradigms, The Ego, The Copyfrog Effect, Conformity: Fear of Being Out-of-Sync with Society's Values or Norms**

- "Resistance to change is both a psychological reaction as well as a physiological one, because change requires the brain to work harder. Our bodies favor homeostasis—the tendency of a system, especially the physiological system of higher animals, to maintain internal stability. The neurobiology of humans is wired to seek homeostasis. Whether you embrace change or not will depend on your approach to new ideas, or ideas that may differ from your own. Sometimes we can mistake new ideas as a criticism of the way we are doing things. But instead of looking at it this way, we can also see it as a new window through which we can view our personal and professional landscapes."
- "If we are to do anything different from what we have been doing, we will need to embrace change. And that will require us to override our natural tendency to seek homeostasis."
- "There are four main reasons why it is so difficult to change.

- **1. PARADIGMS**

- Students graduate within the framework of a specific discipline, complete with rules, assumptions, beliefs, and strictly prescribed ways to make decisions. This becomes our operating paradigm—a box—and if we step out of the box, we will not graduate. Once we have internalized what our teachers deem to be the operating paradigm, all other paradigms appear as wrong, flawed, or silly.

- Many management and leadership theories and philosophies fall into the same level of “stuckness” and are the principal cause of the grief experienced by so many who labor today in uninspiring organizations
 - Donella Meadows stated, “Your paradigm is so intrinsic to your mental process that you are hardly aware of its existence, until you try to communicate with someone with a different paradigm.”
 - We can get out of this “box” by replacing our natural desire to say, “I don’t agree with you!” with “What can I learn from you and your differing perspective?”
 - “...the key to change is always about asking questions instead of pressing your point of view ever more loudly onto others—listening more than speaking, being open rather than closed, being a learner more than a knower.”
 - “Are you a knower, skeptical and sometimes cynical and so sure of your beliefs that you are closed to any others? Or are you a learner who is curious, searching, refreshing your ideas, and updating your knowledge—a contemporary thinker?”
- **2. THE EGO**
- “...without our egos we would be nothing—we would not accomplish great things, make a difference in the world, act in plays, excel in sports, write memoirs, have successful careers, or lead others. Like the shadow and the light, we need the ego—as long as it serves others and we do not serve it.”
 - “A certain intellectual smugness results, and like-minded thinkers close ranks to support each other. This creates what is commonly referred to as the “echo chamber,” a phenomenon where we listen only to those who repeat versions of our own beliefs and values.”
 - “We even hire employees who share the same beliefs so that we can embed our existing routines and processes even more deeply.”
 - “What is your current paradigm—personally and organizationally? What would you like it to be? Do you think there is no room for love in the workplace? What do you need to change in order to manifest a new and inspiring reality?”
- **3. THE COPYFROG EFFECT**
- “...we are often too busy and too distracted to analyze situations objectively and thoroughly, or to pay attention to the changing ideas and conditions around us with open minds. Our failure to do so results, at best, in missed opportunities, and at worst, in our demise. Thus we remain on the trailing edge rather than the leading edge of innovation, effectiveness, performance, and relationships.”
 - “...copyfrog— someone who is afraid to speak up for fear of ridicule or feeling alone, or appearing not to be a team player, even though many others on the team may feel the same way and are just as afraid to speak out as we are. The others who disagree don’t say anything, and neither do we, so the result is that we copy the perceived (but not the real) beliefs of each other—we copy others who are copying us! The copyfrog effect causes us to perpetuate, and inadvertently endorse, the existing paradigm because, though it is being questioned silently by many, silence makes it outwardly appear as though we were the only ones doing so—what Leslie Perlow has called the “vicious spiral of silence.”
 - “Germany Kent points out that “To say nothing is saying something. You must denounce things you are against or one might believe that you support things you really do not.””
- **4. CONFORMITY: FEAR OF BEING OUT-OF-SYNC WITH SOCIETY’S VALUES OR NORMS**

- “It may be completely logical that we should love all human beings—in fact, it would be illogical to argue against this—yet we may feel that society’s values suggest that “love” in the workplace is flakey, too out there, or risky, and therefore our egos could be bruised—a misinformed social self that imposes its will upon us.”
- “The ego wants us to appear strong and invincible instead of vulnerable, humble, and transparent. We know exactly what we should do; we even know what we really want to do, but we have lost our voice and our courage to do so. We are hostage to our ego. In the debate between the essential self and the social self, the social self too often wins.”
- “It takes courage to swim against the current. It takes courage to say, “I don’t know,” “I need your help,” “I was wrong,” “Your idea is better than mine.” It takes courage to be mindful of (but not controlled by) what others will think or say or how they will judge us. It takes courage to say, “I have always done it this way, but perhaps there is a better way.” In other words, it takes courage to be open-minded, to welcome new or different ideas and to set aside ego and defensiveness—to give the essential self more airtime. It takes courage to step from the known to the unknown. Courage requires us to: • Make a personal commitment to our own higher principles • Be aware of and accept the risks involved in living by those principles • Be willing to accept the consequences of those risks...”
- “Rollo May said, “The opposite of courage in our society is not cowardice, it’s conformity.””
- “Charles Darwin famously said, “It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.””

Can you find a replacement for each of these that would generate oxytocin instead of cortisol and thus boost the immune system instead of suppressing it?

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| ▪ <i>You’re killing me</i> | ▪ <i>Bulletproof</i> |
| ▪ <i>Go to hell</i> | ▪ <i>Oh, shoot!</i> |
| ▪ <i>To die for</i> | ▪ <i>If I told you I’d have to kill you</i> |
| ▪ <i>That was killer</i> | ▪ <i>You slay me</i> |
| ▪ <i>Holy crap</i> | ▪ <i>You break me up</i> |
| ▪ <i>Blow my mind</i> | ▪ <i>You crack me up</i> |
| ▪ <i>The bomb</i> | ▪ <i>Combating issues – i.e., “fighting cancer,” “war on drugs”</i> |
| ▪ <i>If looks could kill</i> | ▪ <i>Love you to death</i> |
| ▪ <i>I’d kill for that</i> | ▪ <i>Magic bullet</i> |
| ▪ <i>Blow me away</i> | ▪ <i>Win the battle, but lose the war</i> |
| ▪ <i>That’s sick</i> | ▪ <i>Blow it up</i> |
| ▪ <i>Drop-dead gorgeous</i> | ▪ <i>Don’t beat yourself up!</i> |
| ▪ <i>Blew it out of the water</i> | ▪ <i>Dead in the water</i> |
| ▪ <i>Worth a shot (give it a shot)</i> | ▪ <i>Plan of attack</i> |
| ▪ <i>Let’s destroy them</i> | ▪ <i>Kill your chances</i> |
| ▪ <i>Motivated the hell out of me</i> | ▪ <i>(chocolate cake) to die for...”</i> |
| ▪ <i>That was explosive</i> | |
| ▪ <i>That was the bomb</i> | |
| ▪ <i>I’m dying</i> | |
| ▪ <i>Shoot me now</i> | |
| ▪ <i>I hate [...]</i> | |
| ▪ <i>Bust a gut</i> | |