# Annex One:
# A review of academic literature relating to the nature of leadership

The eight Beliefs we developed, and have explored in order to produce this report, are:

1. **Experiential learning** is the single most efficient way to develop leaders.

2. **Reflection** is a critical key to cementing understanding.

3. **Transformational change** should be a desired outcome of many leadership development intervention.

4. **Group and peer learning** encourage not only individual but collective learning, and a focus on the organization as a whole.

5. The **digital transformation** going on inside organizations should be mirrored inside leadership development.

6. Leadership development should be, rather than a single event, **a continuous process integrated with work**.

7. Changes in **the workplace of the future** (such as the development of **less hierarchical, and more diverse organizations**) should be reflected in leadership development.

8. **Increased resilience**, of the individual and of the organization, should be a critical outcome of leadership development

Leadership is one of the most researched areas in the field of management studies; however, scholars and practitioners are still trying to determine the key attributes that generate leadership success (Avolio, 2011; Bryman, 2011; Sinclair, 2009; Yukl, 1989). An important aspect of the growth in scholarship over the past three decades has been the attempt to understand how future leaders are best developed (Bass, 1997; Day, Fleenor, Atwater, Sturm, & McKee, 2014; DeRue & Wellman, 2009).

This review is certainly not comprehensive – the subjects are too vast for that – but equally it offers interested readers the chance to follow, through the references, thoughts and ideas that spark an interest or that are particularly well attuned to what they are themselves thinking.

Leadership Development should, we believe, understand and reflect where leadership is currently seen or believed to be – otherwise, how can we know from what point we are attempting to develop it? We accept that the point at which we see leadership to be may differ from industry to industry, from region to region, even from organization to organization. However, those differences should, we attest, all be grounded in a thorough understanding of where the academic literature tells us that leadership currently sits. We do, nevertheless, also accept that the literature itself can be contradictory at best, overwhelming, and at times appear to be following fashion or fad. There is not now, and nor has there ever been a broad consensus around what leadership is or should look like and at any given time there are a number of different schools of more or less well accepted thought around leadership and the nature of leaders.

The literature review is indebted to prior work undertaken by two students at Ashridge Business School, the executive education arm of Hult International Business School, the sponsor of this SIG. The students were undertaking MBA projects in 2016/17 and were supervised by SIG member and Ashridge Professor of Practice in Leadership Roger Delves. Both Dominic Paine and Kate Payne have agreed to allow extracts from their

literature reviews, undertaken to explore related areas of leadership, to be used to inform this review.

## A brief overview of current strands in the leadership literature.
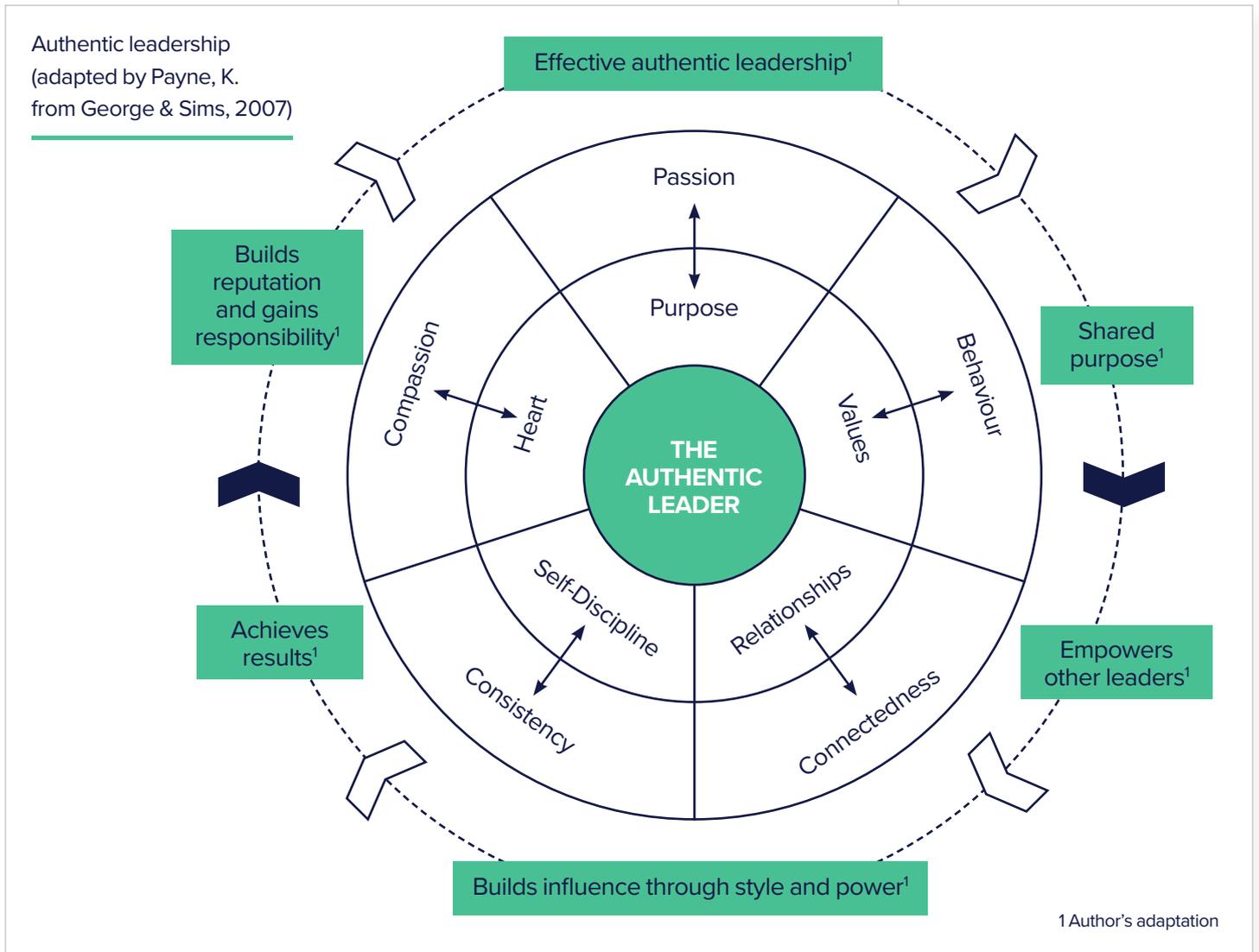
**Defining Authentic Leadership**

There are many schools of thought around what leaders need to be or need to do – they need to be emotionally intelligent, they need to act with integrity, they need to be mindful, to make ethical decisions and so on – but one term which has gained increasing traction is that of being authentic.

Understanding how to lead authentically would appear to be important because, as Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) graphically suggest, leadership is a many-headed hydra that alternately shows the faces of Saddam Hussein and Pol Pot as well as those of Nelson Mandela and Mother Theresa. Moreover, as May, Chan, Hodges and Avolio (2003) remind us, losses due to ethical corporate meltdowns and inauthentic leadership during the latter part of the last century have conservatively cost the world economy hundreds of billions of pounds. Nothing that has happened since their work was published will have diminished the force of their assertion. Indeed, the events of 2008/9 and the credit crunch that followed the scandal of the selling of collateralized debt obligations (CDOs) grounded in sub-prime mortgages, are still having repercussions both in terms of how we view leadership and  more broadly in terms of the financial health of organizations and, by extension, society at large. The age of austerity is still with many developed nations, resilience in a VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous) environment is what much leadership development attempts to explore and develop. Even during the writing of this report, scandal once again almost engulfed Uber, while separately the diesel emissions scandal rumbled on in the automotive industry until overtaken in prominence by the Ghosn scandal.

Michie and Gooty (2005) refer to Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) and to Luthans and Avolio (2003) as they suggest that authentic leaders "are said to engage in self-transcending behaviors because they are intrinsically motivated to be consistent with high-end, other-regarding values that are shaped and developed through the leader's life experiences."

The literature consistently tells is that authentic leaders have examined their values and identified those which are core. Luthans & Avolio define authentic leadership as leadership where a course of action is decided not by situational imperatives but by reference to an examined, broadly unchanging template of core values. George (2004) points out that to become authentic, each of us has to develop our own leadership style, consistent with our own personality and character. But it is not just life experiences that shape and develop values. Leadership development programmes can play a huge part in helping leaders explore what really is important to them, which again is a critically important way in which experiential learning can and will develop leaders.

George & Sims (2007) definition of authentic leadership (see visual) is prevalent, describing authentic leadership as following one's own beliefs with courage and conviction whilst serving others, being genuine and pursuing personal growth. Differing slightly, Avolio, Walumbwa & Weber (2009) define authentic leadership as transparent and ethical while encouraging openness and follower input to make decisions. Notwithstanding which definition we use, authentic leadership appears to be the antecedent of inspirational and emotionally intelligent leadership, possessing many equivalent qualities.

Authentic leadership
(adapted by Payne, K.
from George & Sims, 2007)



Effective authentic leadership[1]

Builds reputation and gains responsibility[1]

Shared purpose[1]

Achieves results[1]

Empowers other leaders[1]

Builds influence through style and power[1]

Passion

Purpose

Compassion

Heart

Behaviour

Values

THE AUTHENTIC LEADER

Self-Discipline

Relationships

Consistency

Connectedness

1 Author's adaptation

**Authentic Leadership is Values based**

Michie and Gooty (2004) define authenticity thus: "one acts in accordance with the true self, expressing oneself in ways that are consistent with inner thoughts and feelings". Luthans and Avolio (2003) see in the authentic leader a "seamless link between espoused values, behaviors and actions…building the moral capacity of leaders to make selfless judgements". This places values at the heart of an objective, codified code of conduct which will lead to predictable and consistent behaviors and ensure that Authentic Leadership can have no egotistic intent. The Authentic Leader's focused route to achieving the team or organization's objective must be one which encompasses an altruistic concern for others.

Self-examination or reflection is a sure way to know that your decisions are driven by a desire for mutual altruism or moral altruism. May, Chan, Hodges and Avolio (2003) say that authentic leadership is ultimately about the leader knowing him or herself and being transparent in linking inner desires, expectations, and values to the way they behave as leader every day, in each and every interaction. Knowing oneself and being true to oneself are therefore the essential qualities of Authentic Leadership.

Thus is created a culture in which Authentic Leadership is hard to sustain. It is not simply that the more prevalent leadership style required is transactional rather than transformational. Authentic transactional leadership is possible, especially when the outcome genuinely is mutually altruistic – both leader and followers (including engaged

stakeholders) benefit. It is rather that within the transactional mode, leaders are more inclined pragmatically to satisfy only their own and their superiors' interests, with little concern for the interests of the followers (who suffer the collateral damage) or for interested stakeholders (for example, environmentalists claim that the interests of big business are a significant deterrent to nations who are attempting to reduce carbon footprints or other ecological damage). Kanungo (2001) points out that the ethical justification for transactional leadership comes from a teleological ethic or an ethic of purpose – consequentialism as it is often termed today. Organizations have purposes or ends. To a consequentialist, acts that promote these purposes are ethical, acts that impede them are unethical. The ends justify the means. But supporters of authenticity in leadership would argue that once these purposes or ends exclude the interests either of followers or of significant stakeholders, then the ethical justification for the transactional leadership style is removed or is unsustainable. The leadership is inauthentic, the ethical argumentation invalid.

**Promoting and Developing Authentic leadership; the role for management development interventions**

May, Chan, Hodges and Avolio (2003) capture the essence of authenticity in saying that authentic individuals are at the center of authentic leadership and authentic leadership is at the base of all positive, socially constructive forms of leadership. Authentic leaders create authenticity in followers and create a culture of authenticity within organizations.

Authenticity requires an immersion in core beliefs and values, and a commitment to living those values. Such immersion can only occur when the individual's own value set has been examined, and when the individual is confident that their own value set and the espoused values of the organization are closely aligned. There may be occasions when there is less alignment between the individual leader's values and the actual or demonstrated values of the organization. But if senior management is firm in its conviction that the gap between demonstrated and espoused company values must be closed, then the authentic leader can transformationally help to bring that change about.

Most leaders have the innate potential to become authentic leaders. Authentic senior leaders can often recognise in others authentic leadership potential. Nevertheless, releasing and maximizing that potential requires a great deal of support through provision of, for example, coaching, through consistent modelling of best behavior from senior leaders, and though structured management development interventions to give emerging authentic leaders the opportunity to explore authenticity in a risk-free environment.

Management development interventions are vital, but alone are not enough. There needs ideally to be an inter-connected approach utilizing modelled best behavior from top management, coaching and mentoring programmes, management development interventions and workplace learning. As established and emerging leaders are identified who seem to be able to offer authenticity, they should be nurtured and also used to bring on other green shoots. In time, authenticity can be a hallmark of leadership within the organization, be that leadership transactional, transformational or an appropriate mix of both.

**Defining transformational leadership**

One of our Beliefs is that transformational change is a desired outcome of any leadership development intervention. An understanding of transformational leadership is therefore likely to prove useful to us in our search for innovative leadership development interventions. However, If leaders, and indeed learning designers can be puzzled by the

concept of authenticity, they can be equally ill at ease with the concepts of transactional and transformational leadership.

To understand transformational leadership, we must first explore its alternative. Transactional leadership involves what Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) call contingent reinforcement. Team members and other followers are motivated by the leader's promises, praise or rewards and they are corrected by negative feedback, reproofs, threats, disciplinary action or even dismissal. If followers do what they transacted to do, regardless of any collateral damage which might accompany their actions, they are rewarded. The operational leader in an organization may be more likely to lead transactionally than transformationally within any reward structure based on delivering tasks or numbers, not least because this leadership style is both task orientated and time efficient as well as bonus rewarded. Leaders who themselves have many tasks to complete and little discretionary time can be drawn to this leadership style regardless of suitability because it is the style which they can (just about) manage to maintain.

Nevertheless, not every leader who appears to be transactional is authentically so. Inauthentic transactional leaders may concentrate solely on negative feedback and threats. This is simply bullying. Others may over-promise with no intention of delivery, regardless of whether targets are met. This is nothing more than deception.

In contrast, Kanungo (2001) tells us that a transformational leader is more concerned with developing a vision that informs and expresses the organization's mission and lays the foundation for the organization's strategies, policies and procedures. At the top of an organization, this is probably accurate. Lower down, where leaders do not directly influence corporate goals and ambitions, the transformational leader will use influencing skills to cause team members to feel empowered, and may set out to persuade and influence to the point where team members' and other followers' attitudes and behavior conform to the values of the leader, or where team members and followers can be persuaded to share the leader's vision. For Kanungo too, in genuine transformational leadership, both the leader and the led are transformed, as are the outcomes of the group's activities. For Burns (1978) the transformational leader must be morally uplifting. Howell and Avolio (1992) felt that only leaders concerned for the common good could be transformational, while leaders primarily concerned with their own self-interest could not so be.

It is immediately apparent that this transformational leadership style takes more of the leader's time than the transactional style. It also requires the leader to concentrate leadership efforts on the team and individuals within the team, rather than on the tasks themselves, which become the responsibility of the team members. The transformational leadership approach needs plenty of discretionary time, combined with a willingness to spend this time with people and an ability to spend the time to good effect.

It is worthwhile noting the self-evident and self-validating statement that not every leader who presents as transformational is so in practice . Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) describe leaders who from a distance could appear transformational, while privately they were more concerned about themselves. Such dissemination is most visibly obvious among politicians and others who stride the world stage, though it is also a common device of fiction to create such characters. O'Connor, Mumford and colleagues (1995) showed that such inauthenticity in apparently transformational world leaders could result in destructive outcomes. We may assume that the same will be true in organizations, which is why our third belief is important in this context. We believe that transformational change is a desired outcome of any leadership development intervention. It follows therefore that we support the need for leaders to explore and to understand transformational leadership as part of their leadership development journey.
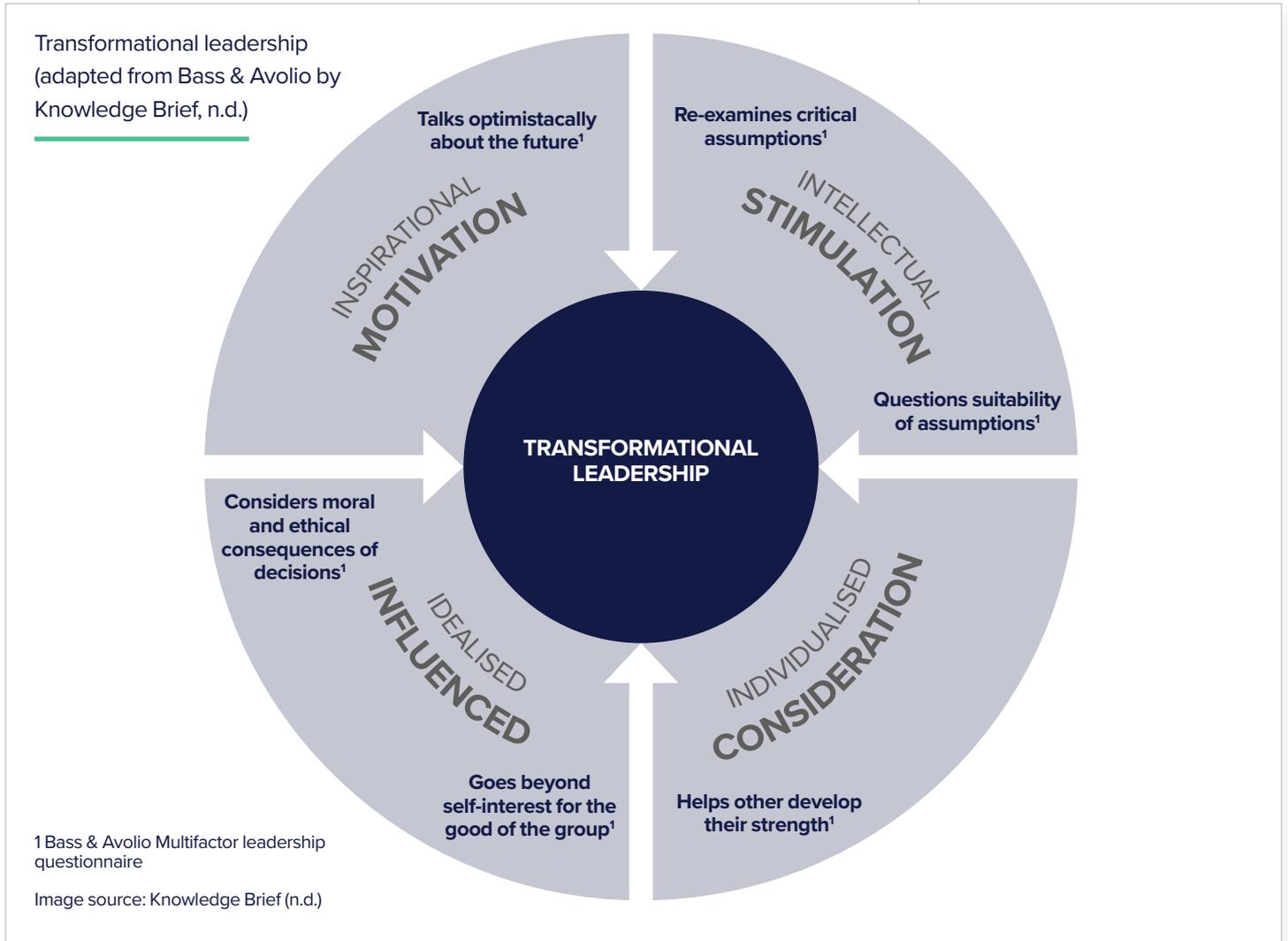
Any such exploration will, we believe, underline for leaders that the difference between the two approaches of transformational and transactional is stark. However, we believe also that it would be misleading to label any successful leader as solely transactional or transformational. Successful leaders have a balanced access to both styles according to contextual requirements and understand when and how to access each. This may seem difficult when the two styles are so different. But underpinning both there must be an ethical or values-based foundation.

It is the behavior of leaders which is authentic or inauthentic, regardless of whether that behavior is transactional or transformational in intent. In the nature of things, leaders may spend more time being transactional (which might loosely translate to operational) rather than transformational (which might equally loosely translate to inspirational), though as Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) point out, a leader's defining moments are transformational. But regardless of any other imperative, a leader's behavior and influencing strategies must always be moral and ethical. This is important because the literature (Kanungo and Mendonca, 1996; Burns, 1978) in places suggests that the transactional influence is devoid of any moral legitimacy. The argument is that transactional leaders use control strategies (such as highly leveraged salary packages or other valued resource management, or at worst hostility and bullying) to induce compliance, which is unethical, and which can swiftly infantilize followers. Burns (1978) suggests that some transactional leaders will control their followers by catering to their lower order physical and social needs.  For these academics, there is an overt risk that transactional leadership can be "grounded in a worldview of self-interest" (Kanungo and Mendonca, 1996) or is "self-absorbing and manipulative" (Burns, 1978) whilst transformational leadership is moral in that it raises the level of human conduct and provides ethical leadership. We have noted that much time is likely to be spent leading transactionally. Clearly a way must be available to leaders to be authentic and other-directed while leading in this fashion.

It is readily understood that today's leaders see uses for a transactional style (once they become familiar with the concept) and further, while some may select such as style for self-directed reasons of self-interest, others will use that style morally and ethically. Equally, even the most assured transformational leader will not always carry every follower along; these leaders are in effect therefore creating a powerful majority which pulls the unconvinced along, sometimes for reasons which may be as equally self-interested as those of the transactional leader. In short, either leadership style is open to abuse. Such abuse is only guaranteed to be avoided if the style selected is underpinned by the authenticity which is grounded in an awareness of and ready access to a sustainable set of personal values.

What today's leaders may lack more than anything is a sense of their own authenticity, a feeling of being grounded in something secure and unchanging as they attempt to offer leadership to others. This is in large part why we set such store by our second belief, namely that reflection is a singular, critical key to cementing understanding. Leadership development opportunities must, we feel, allow leaders to reflect, both on the learning and on themselves. Given the hectic pace of modern business life, given what Charles Hummel terms the tyranny of the urgent, this reflection is ever more vital in helping leaders towards the sense of self that is at the heart of authenticity.

Accepting that there is always a situational context, Northouse (2013) defines transformational leadership as being other-regarding, concerned with emotional responsibility, developing and raising ethical and moral standards of followers whilst encouraging transcendence beyond self-interest. Avolio, Walumbwa & Weber (2009) define transformational leadership as conduct that transforms and inspires followers to transcend self-interest and exceed performance expectations for the organization's benefit. Figure 3 depicts the Bass & Avolio view of transformational leadership

Transformational leadership
(adapted from Bass & Avolio by
Knowledge Brief, n.d.)

**Talks optimistacally about the future**[1]

**Re-examines critical assumptions**[1]

INSPIRATIONAL **MOTIVATION**

INTELLECTUAL **STIMULATION**

**Questions suitability of assumptions**[1]

**TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP**

**Considers moral and ethical consequences of decisions**[1]

IDEALISED **INFLUENCED**

INDIVIDUALISED **CONSIDERATION**

**Goes beyond self-interest for the good of the group**[1]

**Helps other develop their strength**[1]

1 Bass & Avolio Multifactor leadership questionnaire

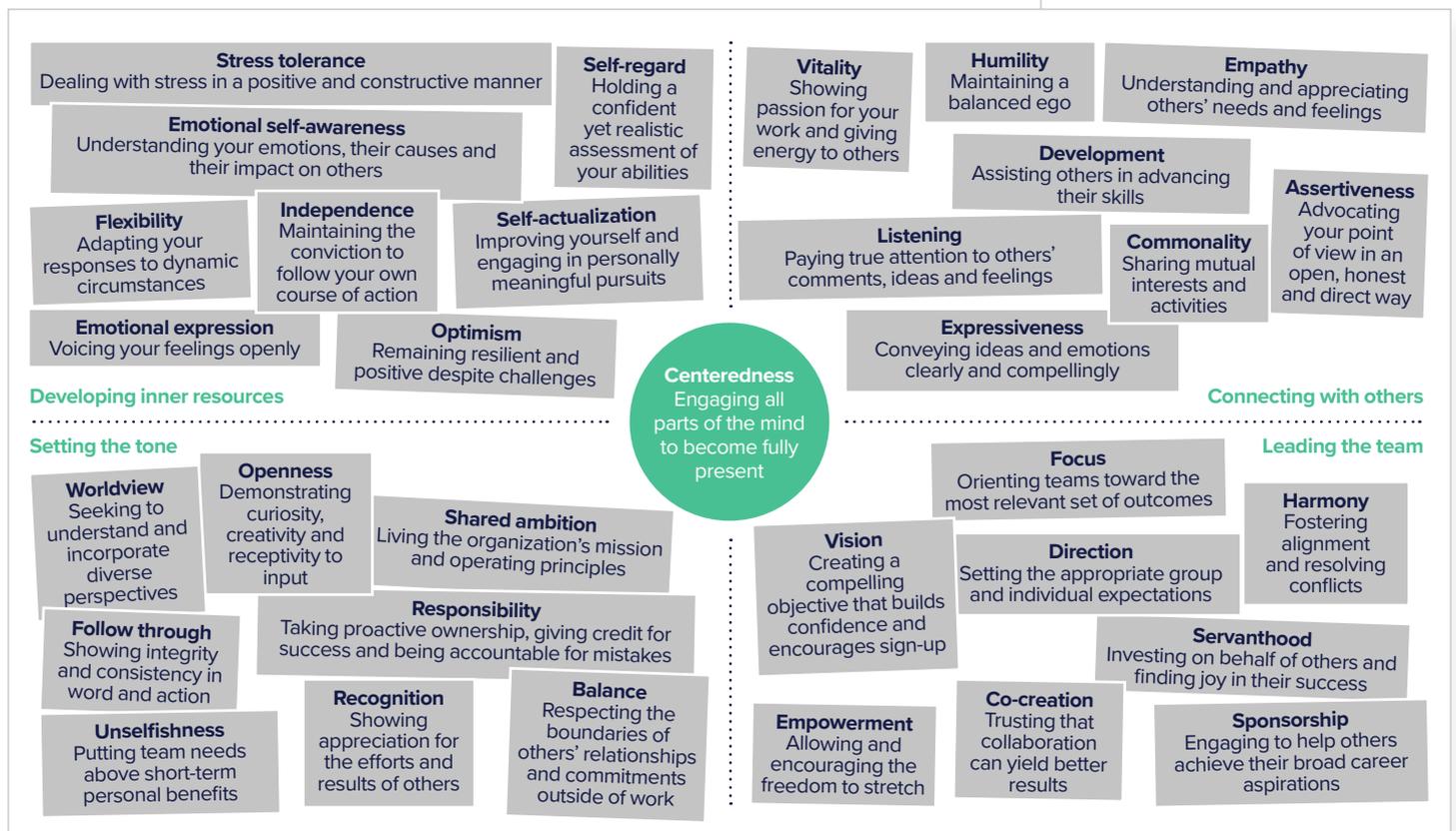Image source: Knowledge Brief (n.d.)

summarized into the four domains behind their Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire. Lindenbaum & Cartwright (2010) believe an antecedent of transformational leadership is emotional intelligence.

**Inspirational Leadership**

Transformational change generally requires some form of inspirational leadership, so an understanding of what is inspirational is important if that belief is to be developed into good practice.

   Inspirational leadership appears at first inspection to be indefinable because one person's inspiration may not be another's. Acknowledging the subjective, leader specific, situational nature of inspirational leadership, Horwitch & Whipple (2016) nevertheless found that leaders inspired followers when they possessed the four attributes shown in Bain's Inspirational Leadership Model (Figure 1). Conversely, Zenger & Folkman (2013) believe the most effective inspirational leaders possess eight attributes, some of which the Bain model excludes, namely championing change, encouraging innovation, being outgoing and offering an effective role model. The opinion of Goffee & Jones (2000, 2015) also differs from Bain insofar as suggesting inspirational leadership must also be simultaneously authentic, intuitive, approachable and slightly distant, whilst judiciously

**Developing inner resources**

**Stress tolerance**
Dealing with stress in a positive and constructive manner

**Self-regard**
Holding a confident yet realistic assessment of your abilities

**Emotional self-awareness**
Understanding your emotions, their causes and their impact on others

**Flexibility**
Adapting your responses to dynamic circumstances

**Independence**
Maintaining the conviction to follow your own course of action

**Self-actualization**
Improving yourself and engaging in personally meaningful pursuits

**Emotional expression**
Voicing your feelings openly

**Optimism**
Remaining resilient and positive despite challenges

**Vitality**
Showing passion for your work and giving energy to others

**Humility**
Maintaining a balanced ego

**Empathy**
Understanding and appreciating others' needs and feelings

**Development**
Assisting others in advancing their skills

**Assertiveness**
Advocating your point of view in an open, honest and direct way

**Listening**
Paying true attention to others' comments, ideas and feelings

**Commonality**
Sharing mutual interests and activities

**Expressiveness**
Conveying ideas and emotions clearly and compellingly

**Connecting with others**

**Centeredness**
Engaging all parts of the mind to become fully present

**Setting the tone**

**Worldview**
Seeking to understand and incorporate diverse perspectives

**Openness**
Demonstrating curiosity, creativity and receptivity to input

**Shared ambition**
Living the organization's mission and operating principles

**Responsibility**
Taking proactive ownership, giving credit for success and being accountable for mistakes

**Follow through**
Showing integrity and consistency in word and action

**Unselfishness**
Putting team needs above short-term personal benefits

**Recognition**
Showing appreciation for the efforts and results of others

**Balance**
Respecting the boundaries of others' relationships and commitments outside of work

**Focus**
Orienting teams toward the most relevant set of outcomes

**Harmony**
Fostering alignment and resolving conflicts

**Vision**
Creating a compelling objective that builds confidence and encourages sign-up

**Direction**
Setting the appropriate group and individual expectations

**Servanthood**
Investing on behalf of others and finding joy in their success

**Empowerment**
Allowing and encouraging the freedom to stretch

**Co-creation**
Trusting that collaboration can yield better results

**Sponsorship**
Engaging to help others achieve their broad career aspirations

**Leading the team**

exposing imperfections and vulnerability. Hence, the differing views appear to support the assertion that inspirational leadership is ambiguous because it is situational and subjective.

What the literature appears to allow us to believe is that we will recognize inspirational leadership when we encounter it, not least because Horwitch & Whipple, Zengler & Folkman and Goffee & Jones all agree that one aspect of inspirational leadership is the ability to support change and make it happen.

Bain inspirational leadership model (adapted from Horwitch & Whipple, 2016)

## Adaptive Leadership

All leadership is fundamentally about complex change as it often means engaging with uncertainty and venturing into the unknown (Kotter, 1996). Working towards change that attempts to address the root causes of complex problems is not easy (Wagner, 2009) and complex social or environmental problems, such as social inequality or climate change present 'adaptive' challenges, which can be messy and exist within multiple systems (Burns, Vaught & Bauman, 2015).

A commonly used mnemonic to summarise the complexity of current times is VUCA – describing an environment as Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous. Originally a military mnemonic used to describe certain types of hostile conditions likely to be encountered. Grint used it in his "wicked problems" approach (Grint, 2001), where he suggested that wicked problems are unique, cannot be modelled, are tough to describe and have no right solution. Although not part of the original formulation, later writers have articulated the opposite of VUCA as SCSC: Stability, Certainty, Simplicity and Clarity. There is a relevant body of work which does explicitly connect VUCA and leadership development, developing rather the concept of "VUCA Prime", namely that there are

four antidotes to VUCA: Vision, Understanding, Clarity, and Agility. At the center of these attempts to capture problem and approach in robust models is an acceptance that the challenging times in which leaders have found themselves for the last decade are unlikely to come to a swift conclusion. In such a febrile climate of unease, leadership and the nature of leaders is unsurprisingly under endless scrutiny.

The concept of 'adaptive leadership' offers a compelling lens through which to explore the behavior of leaders as it focuses on challenges that 'have no easy answers' and that call for new values and ways of thinking. Developed largely by Heifetz and colleagues (Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz, Grashow and Linsky, 2009) adaptive leadership is the practice of "mobilising people to tackle tough challenges and thrive" and is thus about how leaders 'behave' rather than their 'characteristics' (Northouse, 2016). The main criticism

| **Situational Challenges** | **Leader Behaviours** | **Adaptive Work** |
|---|---|---|
| Technical Challenges | 1. Getting on the balcony | **Holding environment** |
| | 2. Identifying the adaptive challenge | (a safe but challenging forum to experiment and prototype) |
| Adaptive and Technical Challenges | 3. Regulating distress | Leaders ← → Followers |
| | 4. Maintaining disciplined attention | Interaction |
| | 5. Giving the work back to people | |
| Adaptive Challenges | 6. Protecting leadership voices from below | Source: (Northouse, 2016) |

for this model of leadership however is that it has undergone relatively little empirical or theoretical validation since its initial inception almost 30 years ago (Northouse, 2016).

Figure 7 provides a conceptual model of the three major components of adaptive leadership (Northouse, 2016). This section looks at the salient criteria of adaptive leadership.

**Situational challenges**

Not all situational challenges leaders face are adaptive: many include technical aspects that require routine management systems to solve. In their book entitled 'the adaptive challenge of climate change', O'Brien & Selboe (2015) refer to the imperative of 'distinguishing between the technical and adaptive challenges' in order to address what Grint termed 'wicked' problems. The technical challenges are those that can be addressed with existing systems and have clearly defined boundaries (such as building robust sea walls or desalinating water in the world of environmental challenges) whereas adaptive challenges can only be addressed through changes in people's assumptions, beliefs and worldviews and are therefore essentially 'wicked' (O'Brien & Selboe, 2015).

Heifetz (1994) asserts that leaders who address predominantly adaptive challenges as (merely) technical are unable to effectively address the root cause of the problem, an inability that often results in failure. This need to identify the adaptive challenge is mentioned in the work of Manolis et al. (2008) on conservation leadership, "Adaptive leaders must recognize the social aspects of their focal issues and facilitate a process whereby new values are co-created among involved parties."

**Collaborative leadership**

Ferdig (2007) asserts, "... leadership identifies and empowers the leader that exists in every person and fosters strong, healthy and just change through collaborative means". Such collaborative practice around leadership requires both individual and collective reflection in order to be effective (Burns, Vaught & Bauman, 2015). To illustrate this point Heifetz & Laurie (2001) describe those adaptive leaders who 'get on the balcony' to observe and reflect on their activities. Similarly Heifetz et al. (2009) contend that effective leadership requires an 'inner process', in which the leader must be grounded in an understanding of the self and a relational worldview in order to create change with others.

In his book on leadership for environmental sustainability Redekop (2010) refers to adaptive leaders who 'turn up the heat' and demonstrate effectiveness by encouraging followers to address deep problems and competing values (referred to in the model as 'regulating distress' and 'maintaining disciplined attention') in order to change behaviors. Similarly he explains that adaptive leaders empower followers to deliver the work collaboratively, 'give the work back to people' and engage all parts of the organization by 'protecting leadership voices from below' Redekop (2010).

# Annex Two:
# Grounding the eight beliefs in academic thinking

Alongside establishing what the literature has to say about the nature of leadership, we think it beneficial to look at each Belief in turn and seek to ground the Belief in current academic thinking.

The eight Beliefs we developed, and have explored in order to produce this report, are:

1. **Experiential learning** is the single most efficient way to develop leaders.

2. **Reflection** is a critical key to cementing understanding.

3. **Transformational change** should be a desired outcome of many leadership development intervention.

4. **Group and peer learning** encourage not only individual but collective learning, and a focus on the organization as a whole.

5. The **digital transformation** going on inside organizations should be mirrored inside leadership development.

6. Leadership development should be, rather than a single event, **a continuous process integrated with work**.

7. Changes in **the workplace of the future** (such as the development of **less hierarchical, and more diverse organizations**) should be reflected in leadership development.

8. **Increased resilience**, of the individual and of the organization, should be a critical outcome of leadership development

## Our **First Belief** is that **Experiential Learning is the single most efficient way to develop leaders.**

Why do we need to develop leaders? Kanungo (2001) notes that every organization has a purpose, and it is the desire to achieve this purpose efficiently and effectively that creates the need for leadership. The main aim of leadership behavior is to influence the actions of followers, because it is through these follower actions that the organization's goals are achieved. It makes sense that leaders need to explore ways to influence and experiment with influencing and persuasion within a safe experiential environment created by a learning space.

McCall (2010) notes, and practitioners may readily agree, that developing leadership talent is much more difficult and complicated than it might at first appear. However, for as long as strong leadership is perceived to be a source of competitive advantage, then organizations will continue assiduously to pursue good, better and best ways of developing their potential current and their future leaders. Both Day et al, (2010) and Avolio & Gardner (2005) draw attention to the role of leadership development in succession planning. Leaders themselves are also vested in their own development, both because it helps them to maintain a regime of constant improvement within their current employment and because it makes them more attractive to other potential employers in the future.

Kolb & Kolb (2009) suggest that organizations are learning systems and the management process should be viewed as a process of learning. In this definition, learning is seen holistically as the basic process of human adaptation. David Kolb was at the heart of defining **Experiential Learning Theory** (Kolb 1984, Kolb & Kolb 2007) in which scholars developed and shared six propositions around experiential learning. These can be summarized as:

1. Learning is best conceived as a process and not in terms of outcomes

2. All learning is re-learning: learning is best facilitated by a process which draws out

    beliefs and ideas about a topic so that they can be examined, tested and integrated with new, more refined ideas.

3. Learning requires resolution of conflict between dialectically opposed modes of adaptation to the world. Conflict, differences and disagreement drive the learning processes.

4. Learning is a holistic process of adaptation which involves the integrated functioning of the total person

5. Learning results from synergistic transactions between the person and the environment: stable and enduring learning arises from consistent patterns of transaction between the individual and the environment. People create themselves through the actual choice of occasions through which they live.

6. Learning is the process of creating knowledge. Knowledge is not the transmission of pre-existing fixed ideas to the learner but is created and recreated in the personal knowledge of the learner.

Within the Experiential Learning Theory model, we can grasp experience through Concrete Experience (CE) or Abstract Conceptualization (AE). Equally we have two dialectically opposed modes of transforming experience: Reflective Observation (RO) and Active Experimentation (AE). Together these represent our four learning modes.

When we learn experientially, we construct knowledge through the creative tension that exists between these four learning modes. Kolb's understanding of experiential learning has meant that it has long been at the center of much thinking around learning design and implementation. Our combined experiences of learning development are such that we are happy to assert that experiential learning is the single most efficient way to develop leaders.

Methods and techniques that utilize learners' previous experiences, link conceptual foundations to practice and encourage reflection are pivotal to the learning process (Lewis & Williams, 1994). Case studies – in the formal, business school use of the phrase – are still a hugely popular teaching tool. Case Studies are demonstrably useful aides to learning. However, Case Studies cannot substitute for learning that occurs from a direct, personal encounter with the phenomena being investigated (McCarthy & McCarthy, 2010). Through experiential learning, participants have to make decisions about situations which are real, or which can create a reality in which the participant believes. The nature of the experience has been the subject of much discussion and debate over years, not least as both fashions and technology have ensured that there is a constant flow of new ideas and initiatives to bring to the market. Experiential learning is a hugely diverse area in its own right, encompassing simulations, role playing, immersions and, increasingly, virtual reality. It is worthy of a SIG of its own. What is clear from the experiences of SIG members and from the literature is that experiencing something is in an important way intrinsically better than any other way of learning about it.

Equally important is that experiential learning should mirror what is going on in the organization. It should utilize the language of the organization, socialize new trends within the organization, build the confidence of leaders that they understand and in an important sense belong to the organization.

Experiential learning therefore starts from the premise that experience is the best teacher – a view supported by the literature (DeRue & Wellman, 2009; McCall, 2010; Thomas, 2008a, 2008b; Thomas & Cheese, 2005; Yeung & Ready, 1995). Frawley, Favaloro & Schulenkorf (2018) point out that Andresen, Boud, and Cohen (2001) illustrated that this style "supports a more participative, learner-centered approach" to leadership development, placing "an emphasis on direct engagement, rich learning events and the construction of meaning" by the leaders themselves (p. 225). As with all

development interventions, this is more the case in some circumstances, and in some industries, than in others. Some leaders, especially younger, less experienced leaders, may come to experiential learning with a body of professional experiences which are predominantly positive: for them, the experience of learning through failure (which is often an important part of experiential learning – failing in a safe environment) is less easily assimilated than it might be by a more experienced leader, better acquainted with failure. Equally, some roles, for example forward facing customer-centric roles, are or may be more readily suited to experiential learning than others. The use of role playing, actors, service complaint scenarios and the like are easier to envisage and to mount than engaging experiential learning around some aspects of, for example, a manufacturing process.

Nevertheless, it is well understood and accepted that key moments in time, including critical company events such as merger or acquisition, expansion, contraction or the recovery from failure, present organizations with opportunities to reflection on leaders and the nature of leadership. Here, Fulmer and Bleak (2008) demonstrate that organizations and their leaders who have experienced major change events (and which organization will not claim to have done so?) can turn these into profound teachable moments.

This idea of teachable moments drawn from the life of the organization is at heart experiential and reflects Thomas' (2008a, 2008b) concept of the crucibles of leadership: "an utterly transforming period of testing from which one can emerge either hopelessly broken or powerfully embodied to learn and to lead" (Thomas, 2008b, p. 3).

This reiterates the truth that learning development professionals are well aware of: in essence, the learning and development of a leader is a complex process which rarely occurs in the classroom. Rather, in many organizations and for many individual leaders, the richest and most memorable lessons come from personal crucible events (Thomas, 2008b). Crucibles can occur on or off the job, and Thomas (2008a, 2008b) suggests that we should draw on these personal experiences in the development process because it is within these experiences, be they of success or of failure, that true learning lies. Overall, Thomas suggests that organizations can and should develop the ability to incorporate the transformative power of crucible experiences to help leaders achieve significant development by adopting an experience-based approach to leader development (Thomas, 2008a, 2008b; Thomas & Cheese, 2005).

Experiential learning is not, however, Action Learning. The World Institute for Action Learning (WIAL) defines AL as a process that involves a small group working on real problems, taking action, and learning as individuals, as a team, and as an organization. It helps organizations develop creative, flexible and successful strategies to pressing problems.

Within the WIAL definition, Action Learning solves problems and develops leaders simultaneously because its simple rules force participants to think critically and work collaboratively. Action Learning is particularly effective for solving complex problems that may appear unsolvable. It elevates the norms, the collaboration, the creativity, and the courage of groups. The Action Learning coach assists group members in reflecting on the advancement of their group functioning, rather than on their problem solving. In this way, Action Learning participants become effective leaders as they solve difficult problems. It seems therefore that some experiential learning may be Action Learning and some Action Learning may be experiential, but key to AL is the concept of real problems, while central to experiential learning is the idea of drawing learning from an experience, whether that experience is immersion in a real problem, in an artificial reality, in a simulation or puzzle or challenge, or in a role play with an actor.

McCall (2010) provides (p3) extensive insight into the experience-based approach. He proposes seven "sure bets" about the role of experience in leadership development:

1) To the extent it is learned, leadership is learned from experience;

2) Certain experiences matter more than others;

3) These experiences are powerful because of the challenges they present;

4) Different types of experiences teach different lessons;

5) Jobs and assignments can be made more developmental;

6) People can get many of the experiences they need in spite of the obstacles;

7) Learning takes place over time and is dynamic.

Now, we know that experience is different to experiential learning, and we know that much of the benefit of experience is lost if the leader does not reflect on it. Indeed, so important is reflection in our view that we have a separate Belief which deals specifically with reflection. So McCall's sure bets are more likely to be sure if the leader is also a learner, and actually does reflect on the experiences that are an integral part of leadership and leader development.

One likely outcome of these sure bets is that the experiential learning will help to produce agile leaders. Agility is a good antidote to elements of the VUCA environment, and agility is a useful skill in the face of volatility in particular. Agility is about swiftness of decision making, sureness of touch with people, certainty with language and speech, a sense of purposeful direction. The anecdotal evidence suggests that a singular outcome of experiential learning is to help leaders to discover and build upon their agility and surefootedness – practice, it seems, really does make perfect.

McCall (2010) also proposes ( p.14) his ideal framework to foster leadership talent:

a) Determine what needs to be learnt;

b) Identify experiences that could offer those lessons;

c) Find a way to get the needed experiences;

d) Create the necessary feedback, support, and incentives actually to learn the lessons sought

This is naturally a potential template for Beginning the Journey, informing the design phase of any intervention. It also helps as a template against which to judge the many and varied experiential learning offerings available to learning development professionals. Will the exercise or game or simulation or role-play actually meet the learning need squarely? Will the experience offer the lessons that need to be learned? Will the intervention generate the right atmosphere of psychological safety which both fosters learning and allows for feedback, support and the space in which to assimilate and learn?

These necessary precursors to learning are also identified by Nyhan, Cressey, Tomassini, Kelleher, and Poell (2004), who suggest that organizations need to create "developmental work" that is conducive to learning. Here, the potential for develop- ment is increased when people have challenging tasks to undertake and are then facilitated to learn from their experiences with adequate and appropriate feedback and support (Nyhan et al., 2004; Trautmann et al., 2007). The importance of facilitating the experience is often understated, but it is rare that experiential learning is not improved by empathetic and insightful facilitation offered as a result of careful observation by informed experts.

These guidelines were echoed almost exactly in the feedback we received when we explored this Belief at the EFMD Corporate Advisory Seminar (CAS) at L'Oreal Paris in January 2019. Here, attendees suggested that experiential learning should be:

•Hands-on

•Within a safe learning environment

•An opportunity to mirror what goes on within the organization

•Challenging and appropriate experiential opportunities

•Supported by technical experts

The suggestion from the literature and supported by practitioners therefore is that the most effective learners are those who can learn from a broad range of experiences by actively seeking out learning, processing experiences, and developing a range of skills and strategies for responding to different learning opportunities (McCall, 2010; Nyhan et al., 2004; Trautmann et al., 2007). If such on-the-job learning and developmental opportunities are embraced by organizations, then leadership talent can be fostered most effectively (McCall, 2010), but if these dynamics can be built into leadership development interventions in addition, then the organization is guaranteed an opportunity to provide the right learning in the right environment with a better likelihood therefore of the right outcomes contributing to better improvements in leadership competencies and associated behaviors.

## Our **Second Belief** is that **reflection is a critical key** to cementing understanding.

In today's VUCA environments, what some leaders may lack more than anything is a sense of their own authenticity, a feeling of being grounded in something secure and unchanging as they attempt to offer leadership to others. This is in large part why we set such store by our second belief, namely that reflection is a singular, critical key to cementing understanding. Leaders play a critical role is shaping and sustaining company culture. Leadership development opportunities must we feel, allow leaders to reflect, both on the learning and on themselves, particularly if they are also to be held responsible for shaping a learning organization. Given the hectic pace of modern business life, given the volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity with which we must cope, given what Charles Hummel terms the tyranny of the urgent, this reflection is ever more vital in helping leaders towards the sense of self that is at the heart of authenticity, and the sense of resilience that so often accompanies it. Allowing a nurturing and reflective practice room to flourish should be, we believe, a fundamental part of an organization's leadership guidelines, learning and development principles and talent management principles.

Reflection is a critical aid to self-awareness. Self-awareness — a subjective but accurate knowledge and understanding of our inner self — is a critical leader skill. Goleman makes it one of the central tenets of emotional intelligence and suggests that if our emotional abilities are not in hand, if we do not have self-awareness, if we are not able to manage our distressing emotions, if we can't have empathy and develop effective relationships, then no matter how smart we are, we are not going to get very far in leading others.

Duval and Wicklunds (1972) comment that when we focus our attention on ourselves, we evaluate and compare our current behavior to our internal standards and values. We become self-conscious as objective evaluators of ourselves. However, it is important both to have the time to reflect and to feel we have the tools to spend reflective time profitably. Many leaders may not necessarily feel well enough equipped to start a reflective practice without not just help and encouragement but active schooling or coaching in the nature of reflective practice.

George's book, True North: Discover Your Authentic Leadership (2007) states that only those who scan their experiences to know who they really are and realize how they should live, ultimately emerge as leaders whom others are prepared to follow. Certainly it seems from anecdotal evidence presented to and within the SIG that senior leaders who

are known to practice reflection are more likely to be seen and accepted as role models: reflective practice seems to be an important aspect of leader credibility.

Showry & Manansa (2014) tell us that Stanford rates soft skill like self-awareness as one of the pillars of managerial capabilities that predicts managerial effectiveness and leadership success. It proposes, supporting the research that Goleman and Boyatzis undertook, that IQ and technical skills are far less important to leadership success than self-awareness. It exhorts that self-awareness—an exact estimation and evaluation of one's own personality and a lucid understanding of how others perceive one—is an indispensable trait that all good managers strive to develop to be successful leaders. This again echoes the findings of Goleman and Boyatzis in the research that led to the EQ model.

The literature in general therefore clearly tells us that self-awareness, emotional intelligence, authenticity are all highly appropriate skills for successful leaders to develop, and that central to their development is the behavioural skill of reflection. Showry and Manansa (2014) state that self-awareness at work is the practice of reflecting on experiences and precisely assessing one's own behaviors and skills as they are manifested in the workplace. Any individual reflection on experiences and behaviors can, they suggest, lead to more thoughtful future leadership behaviors such as:

1.  Awareness of self, experiences and people that have great impact on self;

2.  Understanding of personal values and beliefs, intrinsic and extrinsic motivations;

3.  Self-awareness prompts one to take a realistic view of one's own developmental needs;

4.  Determination to shape one's life on the basis of the understanding of above by setting an overarching goal and building a team to accomplish the goal over a period of time.

Reflection or self-reflection is the capacity of humans to exercise introspection and the willingness to learn more about their fundamental nature, purpose and essence. Reflective practice in the workplace is the ability to reflect on one's actions to engage in a process of continuous learning. (Schön,1983) It places an emphasis on learning through questioning and investigation to lead to a development of understanding. Furthermore, there has been a recognition that reflection is important in sustaining one's professional health and competence and that the ability to exercise professional judgment is in fact informed through reflection on practice (Loughran, 2002).

Reflecting on experiences and precisely assessing one's own behaviors and skills will also help build one's self-awareness, which is in turn regarded as an indispensable trait of good managers and leaders. A leader who recognizes facilitating strengths and crippling weaknesses, feelings, thoughts and actions can make better quality decisions than those who do not.

Self-awareness is not just a private phenomenon and a matter of introspection, but a social phenomenon too. We also get the reflection of ourselves through the human mirrors, from others' opinions, responses and reactions. Effective leaders have the ability to see how others view them and understand the impact of their behaviour on others in the organization (Showry, Mendemu; Manasa, 2014 )

Stodd (2016) suggests that the social dimension of reflection gets more into focus in our open and connected work environment. Reflection and sense-making is an activity carried out in (virtual) communities and less directly powered by individual formal status or experience.

Hess (2014) says that to stay relevant and competitive, organizations and individuals must continuously improve. This requires exploration, invention, experimentation. In that

context, reflection provides a foundation for learning and builds up self-awareness.

Fundamentally, learning is enabling adaptation and improvement. Organizations really cannot learn unless the individuals within them learn. Hence reflection or reflective practice is a core element of achieving and maintaining operational excellence and innovation to drive growth. Showry, Mendemu and Manasa (2014) again: in a world of unprecedented business complexities, leaders in particular are in the need of an inner compass of self-awareness to walk the tight rope of leadership.

Learning development professionals understand and accept that "Reflection" and "learning" are almost synonymous, or at least very closely interlinked. For an organization to be and remain successful reflection and learning are indispensable, they form a basis for keeping a competitive edge. But they do not come for free. Our human operating system allows us to successfully navigate through difficulties in an almost automated way (system 1 thinking) and it takes special effort to change that and come up with new ideas (system 2 thinking). But this is exactly what is needed for reflection and learning.

Hess (2014) suggests that leaders play a critical role in forming the company culture around learning and giving the room and nursing the capability for reflection. I.e. they first have to understand and apply reflection for themselves, and then also to create an environment in which reflection is acknowledged as a business-critical discipline and continuously practiced. They are at the core of shaping a learning organization. Allowing for a reflexive environment means to:

- Develop metacognition, i.e. manage own thinking and identify when to use intentional reflection, use own and others' emotional cues
- Do critical inquiries and debates
- Test individual views
- Create alternative options
- Do root-cause analysis
- Do team work, use feedback-loops.

Allowing for and nurturing a reflective practice has to be a fundamental element in

- Leadership guidelines: What is the company strategy and leadership aspiration? How is reflection a winning proposition for the company? What is a companies' archetype of a leader? How is reflection used at the top of the house?
- Learning and development principles: How are companies creating a shared fundamental understanding for reflection? How are companies supporting leaders practically? How are development interventions considering reflexive principles?
- Talent management practices: How are companies identifying leaders internally and externally? What are they looking for in candidates, both in recruiting and for a leadership track? How are companies encouraging behaviour leading into reflective practise?

Reflection, then, we believe should stand at the center of a self-aware leadership praxis. Innovations in leadership development should seek new and engaging ways to encourage leaders and leaders-to-be to develop and refine the skill of reflection. Emerging practices such as mindfulness should have a role here, and as always the challenge is to find the time to do something which is important, but which rarely carries the pungent whiff of urgency which so frequently and immediately grabs the leader's attention.

Our **Third Belief** is that **transformational change should be a desired outcome** of many leadership development interventions.

The topic and importance of organizational or transformational change is not new. There are a large number of research papers, methods and guidelines for this, but still there is no break-through in finding the silver bullet for successful change initiatives. In short, the problem with change programmes is that, in most cases, they do not work! Taborga (2012) quotes Meaney & Pung, (2008) to establish that since the time that large transformational changes in organizations became the subject of research in the fields of management and leadership studies, it appears that only one in three change initiatives has been deemed successful. That success rate, were it transferred to the actual sphere of operations of the organizations concerned in potential transformational change, would almost certainly result in the failure of the organization at large.

It also seems, as Taborga explains, that what we research around transformational change does not seem to help us understand it better. The industry has complied am impressive body of data, both qualitative and quantitative, about change management and the role of leadership in change initiatives (Vinson & Pung, 2006). However, none of this knowledge and understanding has yet altered the success ratio in transformational change since data began to be generated around success and failure about a quarter of a century ago. Either we cannot learn from what we know, or we do not yet know the right things. Aiken and Keller (2009) state "it seems that, despite prolific output, the field of change management hasn't led to more successful change programs".

The reason behind this apparent failure to be able to learn or to apply what we learn may lie in the very nature of change itself. We live in a period, where settings and (business-) environments change faster and faster. Research tells us that in any given internet minute, Google fields 3.7m search enquiries, while 187m e-mails are sent, along with 18m text messages and 38m WhatsApp messages – while we still find time to watch 466k hours of Netflix and 4.3m YouTube videos (@LoriLewis; @OfficiallyChadd).

Developments are not linear any more, but quite often disruptive. It may be that not enough that we learn about change is pertinent for long enough – by the time we research, learn and apply, the learning about change has been displaced by change itself. This is of course another example of VUCA in action: volatility makes it very hard for any organization to keep ahead of the change curve, either within their sphere of operation or in terms of what their leaders need to k now and understand about leading with and through change. Adaption to this environment and having a strategic orientation accordingly, is important if an organization is to be and to stay successful in these agile times.

The necessary adaptations do not only tackle single functions or departments but involve the whole company and each and every employee. It is not about new processes or organizational units but it influences the DNA.

Taborga (2018) turns to Isern and Pung (2007) to characterize large organizational transformation as having "startlingly high ambitions, the integration of different types of change, and a prolonged effort often lasting many months, in some cases, even years"

The Business Directory describes this sort of transformation as, "A shift in the business culture of an organization resulting from a change in the underlying strategy and processes that the organization has used in the past. A transformational change is designed to be organization-wide and is enacted over a period of time."

(http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/transformational-change.html)

An old saying suggests that "Change starts in your head" If we take this aphorism and transfer it to the business environment, we might suggest that Transformational Change

starts with its leaders. This is the sort of statement that has the taint of cliché about it, but we should remember that a cliché is such because it is an often repeated truth, and it is beyond reasonable doubt true to say that today it is a requirement of our leaders that they lead the change.

Schwab (2016) in his influential The Fourth Industrial Revolution refers to a World Economic Forum report published in 2015 which identifies 21 tipping points – moments when specific technological shifts hit mainstream society – that will shape what he calls our future digital and hyper-connected world. They are all expected to occur within the next decade. They include (and the figure represents the % of informed respondents who believe that this tipping point will have indeed been reached by 2025):

- •90% of people having unlimited and free, advertising supported storage (91%)
- •1 trillion sensors connected to the internet (89.2%)
- •The first robotic pharmacist in the USA (86.5%)
- •10% of reading glasses connected to the internet (85.5%)
- •The first 3D printed car in production (84.1%)
- •90% of world population with regular internet access (78.8%)
- •10% of all cars on USA roads driverless (78.2%)
- •30% of corporate audits performed by AI (75.4%)
- •10% of global GDP stored on blockchain technology (57.9%)
- •The first AI machine on a corporate board (45.5%)

If transformational change is a prerequisite for long-term successful enterprises and success of change is dependent on the quality of the leadership of teams, then arguably the highest priority for leadership development is to prepare them to face this challenge.

Taborga (2012) in his work exploring leadership stage development and its effect on transformational change, recalls that Torbert and Associates (2004) approach the subject of organizational transformation purely from the leadership standpoint irrespective of method and practice. The Torbert approach is grounded in research from which was extracted a seven-stage framework of progression for leaders. Rooke and Torbert (2005) state that leaders evolve to one of seven stages of leadership where they will most likely stay for the better portion of their professional lives. They acknowledge that a small number do continue slowly to evolve to higher levels, but the research suggests a leader ceiling, and therefore suggests an adoption of an approach which recognizes that ceiling and which gets leaders as adept as they can be at their individual ceiling point. Any evolution through the framework is guided by the experiences of the individual, which start early in life (Simcox, 2005).

Torbert and Associates (2004) suggest that it is only in the last three of the seven stages of leadership development (which are the least populated numerically) that leaders will have enough reflective meaning-making successfully to drive real transformational change. The authors argue that a high level of internal awareness is necessary for a leader to grasp all of the nuances present in real transformational change situations. Torbert defines these later stage leaders as transformative learners, that is, they are in a constant path of self-development. This suggests that the number of leaders actually capable of driving the transformational change likely to be caused by Schwab's fourth industrial revolution are unlikely to be enough.

This notion of transformative leaders as being self-transforming is a common theme in leadership studies (Nailon, Delahaye & Brownlee, 2007) and it is often expressed of

transformational change that the leader, the led and the organization are all transformed when the change succeeds. However, the implication of Torbert's work is that very few leaders have the capability to effect this profound impact within large transformational initiatives. One challenge for leadership development may be defined as helping leaders become capable of leading transformational change earlier within Torbert's seven stages of leadership development.

Torbert's framework is entitled 'action-logics'. An 'action-logic' informs and drives reasoning and behavior and includes what one sees as one's life's purpose, what needs are acted on, what ends are approached, one's experience of being and how one thinks of oneself in relation to the rest of the world (Cook-Greuter, 1999; Torbert et al., 2004).

An illustration of the seven action-logics
(Rooke & Torbert, 2004)

| Opportunist | Diplomat | Expert | Achiever | Individualist | Strategist | Alchemist |

Early development or 'Conventional' action logics

Advanced or 'Post-Conventional' action logics

Action-logics are divided into two main stages of development. The conventional action-logics range from the 'Opportunist' to the 'Achiever', which represent the stages of development achieved by 83% of leaders sampled by Torbert et al. (2004). The post-conventional action-logics represent the Individualist (11%), Strategist (5%) and Alchemist (1%). There is a further eighth stage currently under research entitled the Ironist.

A study carried out by Hind, Wilson, & Lenssen (2009) on leadership competencies referred to the 'reflexive' competencies of leaders, who hold visions with long-term perspectives, an ability to adopt a systems approach (Cook-Greuter, 2000; Senge, 2006), unite other worldviews and have a high degree of emotional intelligence (Goleman & Lueneburger, 2010), all of which arguably point to the 'Strategist' leader.

Similarly Visser and Courtrice (2011) presented findings that suggest that leaders are able to "*appreciate interdependency and interconnectedness of the whole system at all levels*" as well as envisioning futures with long time-frames and incorporating different belief systems and worldviews, which presents a possible 'Strategist' set of qualities.

While clearly a useful framework for assessing the worldviews of leaders, some see the action-logics framework as having some drawbacks. The model can be disillusioning on the first sight, as it assumes that in general individuals will people stay in their level and any further development will be very difficult and demanding.

Torbert's action-logics (Harthill Consulting, 2016) note Opportunist is here termed Impulsivist, and the eighth stage Ironist is included.

**innovates processes** ●
non-conformity diversity
cultural relativism

**leads transformation** ●
systems view creativity
interdependence growth

**meets goals** ●
independence
effectiveness
rationality

**authentic visionary** ●
sees globally

INDIVIDUALIST
STRATEGIST
ACHIEVER
ALCHEMIST
EXPERT
IRONIST
DIPLOMAT
OPPORTUNIST
IMPULSIVE

**problem-solver** ●
skill orientation
effieciency duty

**creates liberating
situations** ●

**loyal supporter** ●
appeasing conforming
belonging

**unpredictably reactive** ●
needs good/bad me
reactive

**takes the chance** ●
dominant self-
protective

Worse, it can appear to be linear and hierarchical in nature, which gives the impression that the more advanced the action-logic the more emotionally intelligent, enlightened or happy the leader is. This is not how the model should be interpreted. Harthill (2016) stresses, "each action-logic has its own merits and difficulties, beauties and shadows" which suggests the more people become 'conscious' of the world, the more suffering they may undergo but also the more effective they may become at dealing with complexity and ambiguity. Individuals can gain great resilience from the self-awareness that comes from knowing where their leadership ceiling currently lies, and may always lie, as it helps them to see where and how to be the best leader they can be and what skills to concentrate on developing to the full, be they Diplomat, Expert, Achiever or other.

Leaders may also 'revisit' earlier action-logics in order to cope with high-stress situations such as confrontation or severe setbacks (Harthill, 2016). This return to earlier strengths is something which, if done knowingly and consciously, can be both rewarding and strengthening for leaders, again helping their resilience and in turn supporting them as they attempt to lead to and through transformational change.

It is also undeniable that 'Strategists' and 'Alchemists' only account for 6% of the tested population (Torbert et al., 2004), which means they are rather rare. If 'effective' leaders operate at least from the Strategist action-logic (as suggested by Brown, 2012) does it suggest that 'effective' leaders are also a rarity? Can this perhaps help to explain why so much organizational change does not work and why it is so hard to make leadership development interventions transformational?

In Henderson's (2002) description of Transformational Change we find four dimensions that support the elusive goal of transformational change. One of them is "transformative learning" and its description can be a template for leadership development approaches that lead to transformational change in those who lead:

> "Transformative learning is the process of examining, questioning, validating and revising our perceptions of the world" (Henderson, 2002 in Taborga 2018).

Our discipline of leadership development, in all its different forms, must provide opportunities and concrete experiences for our participants within which they can examine, question, revise and validate their perception of the world. Our programmes should offer experiences for self-reflection, for questioning and validation – as indeed others of our Beliefs suggest and support.

We believe that it is now widely accepted that Leadership Development of the future has to get out of the classroom and lecture hall for the majority of its time. It has to be at root reflective, experiential and interactive learning. Interaction with other environments and other diverse people, are prerequisite to change perspectives. But, of course, the challenge is to move from knowing what's right to doing what's right, and we do not underestimate the logistical and financial challenges that surround this sort of fundamental, transformative shift in approach to leadership development. However, the prize at stake is huge indeed and we do firmly believe that offering these types of learning opportunities should be the focus of leadership programs which aim to transform.

A popular experiential approach is to provide "learning experiences", where the participants visit for examples start-ups or high performing organizations. But the visit itself is only one piece of the puzzle, and not the piece which necessarily leads to the reflection which will make a real difference. It is the genuine discussion around the experience, discourse, disagreement, reflection, contextualization and application to appropriate situations which lead to insights and make it more than an annual works outing. These take time and take some third-party management.

Besides the learning approach, there is an important question around personnel development which organizations need to ask. Based on Torbert's assumption of stable development stages, is there a valid and reliable way to identify the development stages of the management team, or other key teams, to increase the success of organizational change by composing the right team? For example, can senior teams readily take an organization in the right future direction with no access within the team to Strategist or Alchemist thinking? Does this sort of question helpfully or unhelpfully open the discussion of testing, assessment and prediction again?

It may even be that a good challenge for leadership development professionals is to discover where they are in action-logics positioning and then to ask how can that action-logic state, be it conventional or post-conventional, engender, support and nurture transformational leadership development interventions?

Transformational change, or a version of it, is also explored in Scharmer's (2018) Theory U.

At the heart of this theory is a methodology that is designed to break us away from unproductive cycles of thinking and the resulting ineffective decision making, towards a process which is both more empathetic to other, relevant perspectives and more open to new ways of looking at things. Scharmer describes Theory U as a process or a journey, and has coined the term 'Presencing' to capture the combination of sensing and

presence which is at the core of the five movements which he ascribes to the journey:

- Co-initiating common intent
- Co-sensing the field of change
- Presencing inspiration and common will
- Co-evolving through innovations
- Co-creating strategic microcosms

The journey is U shaped, with the critical point at the base of the U, where the voyager is required to drop everything inessential. For Scharmer, this letting-go allows us to connect with our best future self. This process is transformational, and also maps well onto the journey through emotional intelligence, suggesting once again that much of the best emerging or emerged thinking in this area is looking at similar territory through only slightly different lenses.

According to Scharmer (2007) one of the values created by journeying through the "U" is to develop seven essential leadership capacities:

1. Holding the space: listen to what life calls you to do (listen to oneself, to others and make sure that there is space where people can talk …)

2. Observing: Attend with your mind wide open (observe without your voice of judgment, basically means to get rid of past cognitive schema)

3. Sensing: Connect with your heart (facilitate the opening process, i.e. look interconnected wholes)

4. Presencing: Connect to the deepest source of your self and will (act from the emerging whole)

5. Crystallizing: Access the power of intention (e.g. make sure to find a very small group of key persons commits itself to the purpose and outcomes of the project.)

6. Prototyping: Integrating head, heart, and hand (basically, it means that one should act and not let various sources of paralysis like reactive action, too much analysis, etc. interfere)

7. Performing: Playing the macro violin. (e.g. find the right leaders, find good social technology to get a multi-stakeholder project going)

Scharmer's work is today at the center of a leadership and management practice which is too big to be neatly summarized here. There are multiple publications which explore Theory U, just as there are around Transformational Leadership, Emotional Intelligence and other credible additions to the lexicon of leadership development and practice. What does seem clear is that this theory resonates with leaders both as theory and when applied to practice, and has drawn to it other notable leadership thinkers such as Peter Senge and Joseph Jaworski.

## Our Fourth Belief is that Group and peer learning encourage not only individual but collective learning, and a focus on the organization as a whole.

Learning is the journey more than the event, it is the canvas more than the picture, the attitude more than the action. The mindset which we bring to learning sets the tone and culture of the organization's relationship with learning.

> "Mindsets are the assumptions and expectations we have for ourselves and others. These attitudes guide our behavior and influence our responses to daily events." Dr. Robert Brooks

Alfred Binet was the scientist who created the IQ test which for years was used to determine how "clever" individuals were – and wrongly used by many to determine ceilings. Binet himself said that "some modern philosophers assert that intelligence is a fixed quality. We must protest and react against this brutal pessimism. With practice, training and method, we manage to increase our attention, memory and judgement and literally become more intelligent than we were before."

But for this to work as effectively as it can, each of us needs a growth mindset – an attitude to learning which embraces challenges, persists through setbacks, sees effort as the path to mastery, learns from criticism and finds inspiration in the success of others. This mindset has much in common with the authenticity mindset which we have explored earlier, and little in common with the fixed mindset, which will tend to avoid challenges, give up readily, resent the success of others, ignore criticism and instead focus on showing others how good they are at those things which they have already mastered.

A leading researcher in this field is Carol Dweck. According to Stanford University psychologist Dweck, (2016) success is not determined by innate talents and intellect. Rather, success depends upon mindset – the degree to which we believe we have the capacity to cultivate our intelligence and grow our abilities.

The evidence that growth mindsets can and do support individual and collective learning is persuasive:

- Business school students taught a growth mindset learned more skills and got better grades (Kray & Haselhuhn, 2004)

- Managers with a growth mindset more likely to notice improvement in their employees vs. those with a fixed mindset, who are stuck in first impression (Heslin & Latham, 2005)

- Managers with a growth mindset are rated by their subordinates as providing better coaching for employee development.

- Managers with a growth mindset sought more improvement feedback from their subordinates and were better at improving their management techniques (Heslin, Vandewalle & Latham, 2008).

The degree to which we believe we have the capacity to cultivate our intelligence, grow our abilities and learn from our failures. Group and peer learning – collective learning – is important because we know, intuitively if not through experience, that the same old thinking leads to the same old results. Or as Marshall Goldsmith puts it, what got us here, won't get us there.

In Dweck's book, *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success,* she writes:

"Why waste time proving over and over how great you are, when you could be getting better? Why hide deficiencies instead of overcoming them? Why look for friends or partners who will just shore up your self-esteem instead of ones who will also challenge you to grow? And why seek out the tried and true, instead of experiences that will stretch you? The passion for stretching yourself and sticking to it, even (or especially) when it's not going well, is the hallmark of the growth mindset.

This is the mindset that allows people to thrive during some of the most challenging times in their lives."

Henry Ford famously claimed that anyone who stopped learning was old, be they twenty or eighty, while anyone who keeps learning stays young.

The point of the effort we put into shared learning is to improve performance, and we often measure performance against competencies. Osagie, Wesselink, Runhaar & Mulder (2018) point to the work of Bolhuis and Simons (2001) in identifying four types of learning activities through which work performance could be improved:

a) Learning through experience

b) Learning through critical reflection

c) Learning through theory

d) Learning through social interaction

We address the first two in Beliefs One and Two, addressed earlier in this paper. We have underlined throughout the importance of theory and the application of theory to practice, and this is further evidenced in the section containing Case Studies later in the paper. Important for this Belief, however, is learning through social interaction. This can be characterised as informal learning, learning from each other, peer-to-peer learning.

Osagie, Wesselink, Runhaar & Mulder (2018) suggest that this sort of learning centers on active interaction with others and involves learning with and from others (Bolhuis and Simons 2001). Learning through social interaction will generally include learning activities such as collaborating with colleagues with a different background and requesting or obtaining feedback from others (Cheetham and Chivers 2001).

Van der Krogt (1995) describes how employees are central actors in the learning networks they are part of and co-create. This is important because it underlines that the successful group and peer learning environment is both self-sustaining and self-satisfying. The type of learning networks that professionals co-create and use in order to develop their competencies depends to a large extent on the way in which their work and position are organized, and on the dynamics between the various actors within each network (Poell et al. 2000; Van der Krogt 1995, 1998). Many organizations today have readily available intranet systems with online learning stimuli to help generate and sustain learning environments, and there are also readily available proprietary software systems to help self-formed groups to interact, as well as software provided by the supportive organization. The determining factor is rarely the availability of an infrastructure; it is lack of opportunity, lack of perceived available time which hinders which most hinders the efficient and effective use of learning networks. It is perhaps another example of the triumph of the urgent over the important in that the immediacy of the day-to-day overwhelms the importance of preparing for the future.

The learning leader – a leader who believes in the growth mindset at an individual and at a team level – will actively support and attempt to sustain co-created learning networks that facilitate peer-to-peer learning and will also encourage other types of learning through social interaction, such as co-coaching, a feedback culture where feedback is sought, given and appreciated, the sharing of knowledge and of learning from failure as well as from success. The learning leader will also help others to value learning appropriately, which in turn will encourage individuals to mine out the time to invest in learning and in self-improvement.

Learners also have a degree of personal agency involved here: they can decide to engage or not with both individual and collective learning. This brings us back full circle to the responsibility of leaders to encourage a growth mindset in individuals and in teams, and to generate and sustain a growth culture. If they can do this, and then foster opportunities for continuous learning, then this powerful aid to personal and group development can be well employed and well directed.

Nikolova et al. conducted an extensive literature review and proposed a three-dimensional conceptualization to capture a learning climate which would be conducive to continuous group and peer learning. The first dimension, facilitating learning climate, describes the level to which the company and workplace support and facilitate learning opportunities for their employees (Kyndt et al. 2009). The second dimension, appreciation learning climate, refers to how much the company rewards learning behavior. The third dimension, error-avoidance learning climate, talks about the extent to

which a company encourages, allows or attempts to avoid mistakes.

Creating and maintaining this sort of complex, inter-dependent three dimensional learning climate, though of course it is demanding and takes time, will help to promote learning agility and dexterity, because peer to peer learning, by its nature more informal, more contextual and more seamlessly integrated into the organization, is often both more efficient and effective and better received than learning through formal intervention.

Our **Fifth Belief** is that the **digital transformation** going on inside organizations **should be mirrored inside leadership development.**

> "Let's be clear about one thing: Digital technologies are doing for human brainpower what the steam engine and related technologies did for human muscle power during the Industrial Revolution. They're allowing us to overcome many limitations rapidly and to open up new frontiers with unprecedented speed. It's a very big deal. But how exactly it will play out is uncertain"
>
> Bernstein, A., & Ramam, A. (2015). Harvard Business Review, 93(6), 66-74.

Just as it took decades to improve the steam engine to the point that it could fuel the Industrial Revolution, it's taking time to refine digital technologies. Computers and robots will keep evolving and will learn to do new things at an amazing pace. This is why we are at an inflection point today, at the dawn of what Brynjolfsson and McAfee (2014) call the 'Second Machine Age.'

Any understanding of the full impact of the digital transformation in the workplace and also any feel for how the digital transformation impacts on approaches to leadership and to the development of leaders is only emerging. There has been early research dating from the 1990s, and research has been growing in degree and complexity year on year as the digital transformation itself has gathered pace, meaning that constantly new aspects are emerging and the consolidation of knowledge and understanding is ongoing.

In its attempt at clarification and overview creation, The Academy of Management Discoveries (AMD) structures digital transformation along a macro, meso and micro dimension. (Academy of Management Discoveries (2018). At the macro-level, the relationship between digital transformation, institutions, and strategy is reciprocal, such that digital transformation might influence the evolution of institutions, and existing institutions might shape, in turn how digital technologies diffuse and evolve. Examples for such mutual impact are changing balances of transaction costs through technology, the role of regulation and antitrust or the use of platform models. (Academy of Management Discoveries (2018)

At the meso level the digital transformation creates a higher diversity of competition, new business models and new organizational forms. For instance, new business models come into existence and existing ones need to be adapted because of digital interfaces that connect with customers, suppliers and complementors. Current assumptions about the role of knowledge (e.g., transfer, absorptive capacity, and stickiness) in driving organizational innovation and learning may need to change: Information can be transferred easily and at great distances, but digital companies still tend to be located in geographical clusters, contingent workers might never meet their employers, but their outcome and performances need to be integrated within the organization still. Organizational learning and knowledge transfer can happen through a multitude of

channels and yet, digital technologies might limit some forms of learning based on personal interactions. (Academy of Management Discoveries 2018)

On a micro level, digital transformation affects individual career choices, career progression and organizational outcome, also in quite diverse ways. Here we might quote examples such as outsourcing: it has doubtless been beneficial for advancing certain technological areas, yet it can also create barriers to mobility and isolation in that, for example, skilled freelancers might be connected to their specialized community but miss the daily social interactions that happen within the organization. Elsewhere, the use of digital tools highly influences individual cognition: through them individuals can easily find the exact match of their query, but there may be undisclosed dangers, such as herd behaviour or a loss of creativity.

Schwarzmüller et al. (2018) conducted a literature review on the impact on the digital transformation on organizations in combination with a (German-centric) survey with 49 recognized digitalization experts and identified key themes of change. In sum, four key themes of change affecting both work design and leadership emerged: work-life and health, the use of information and communication technology, performance and talent management and organizational hierarchies. In addition, two macro-level change dimensions regarding the structure of work and relationship-oriented leadership evolved.

Existing research outlines changes in work and leadership in organizations as a consequence of the digital transformation. For example, one change shows that instant messaging services and social networks allow for direct communication with leaders on all organizational levels, while another suggests that decision making is increasingly based on the intelligent analysis of big data, meaning in turn that what is discounted is  the own experience and intuition of leaders. More generically, research showed that more and more employees work from home or in virtual teams, and leaders need react to that as well. (Schwarzmüller et al. (2017))

The little available research specifically on leadership has stressed the importance of high-quality leader-member exchange, transformational leadership and supportive leader attributions for flexible work. Critical elements of for virtual teams consist of inspirational leadership, transparent reward systems, a responsibility shift from leaders to team members, resulting in leaders orchestrating rather than controlling followers.

Both research and the anecdotal evidence of leaders and team members within the SIG and more widely persuasively suggests that technology adoption in organizations changes the skills required of both employees and leaders. With routine work being automated, competencies that seem to matter are problem solving, creativity, efficiently dealing with large amounts of information, social skills and fast decision making. For leaders, tolerating ambiguity as well as inspiring and motivating followers seem set to become more crucial skills in the digital age.

A final domain of research is the impact of digital technology on power structures in organizations. It (Schwarzmüller et al. (2017)) shows diverging results: on the one hand, digital technologies help to identify those with most knowledge in a given field, shifting power from those with legitimacy to those with expertise. On the other hand, computer-aided monitoring tools allow for increased managerial control and a strengthening of existing hierarchies.

Two important questions for further investigating the impact of the digital transformation on organisations are:

- How does the digital transformation change how we design our places of work and our work flow?
- How does the digital transformation change leadership and what we demand or expect of our leaders?

Four key *themes of change* emerged from the survey:

**1. The work-life and health domain**

The digital transformation continues to increase the spatial and temporal flexibility of work, leading to a lack of boundaries between work and private life. One consequence is, that leaders will have to pay increased attention to employees' health and to allow for breaks and respect digital freedom. It cannot be that employees have to be "always-on" and cultures have to be created and respected which allow for the potential for constant availability/response not necessarily to lead to the requirement for constant availability/response.

At the same time the complexity at work grows where there is a very high information density. Not losing track, navigating ambiguity, and higher speed become central challenges, and form reciprocal relationships between the changed work-life setups and job demands. (Schwarzmüller et al. (2017))

**2. Use of information and communication technology**

Big data and tools for visualizing them increase control over work processes and allow for more informed decisions, while at the same time reducing the freedom of action due to an increased standardization. Electronic assistance systems provide optimal support in the workflow and ultimately replace human labor with automation, particularly in administrational activities.

In organizational collaboration and communication, the importance of teamwork increases as knowledge as a resource can only be developed and advanced together. It is expected, (Schwarzmüller et al. (2017)) that departmental structures are replaced by project-based, self-organizing teams and temporary networks of experts (both within and also across organizations).

**3. Organizational performance and talent management**

The increased application of technology to work leads to an increased need for IT competencies while routine tasks are automated. There will be a higher need for creativity and problem-solving for the tasks not being automated. This in turn will require an increased agility and capability for lifelong learning.

Leaders additionally need to be able to manage uncertainty and complexity and to actively handle and initiate change. Hence, they need to be communicating stability and continuity, while things are changing constantly. This also means, leaders need to be learning more themselves and then promoting changes and development in their organization more actively to provide direction and optimal support.

Technologies such as virtual collaboration tools and shared documents lead to higher performance transparency, and the contribution of individual employees becomes more visible and measurable. This allows for leaders to display a higher output orientation when evaluating employees' performance.

**4. Organizational hierarchies**

Digital tools (e. g. feedback apps) allow for an increased participation of employees in organizational decision making, enable real-time involvement in a vast variety of topics and decisions. Also, given the high complexity and uncertainty, decisions can be made less top down as leaders often do not have the capacities and knowledge to react fast

enough.

The digital transformation seems to flatten hierarchies. Leaders are expected to lead in a more participatory way by actively incorporating their followers' ideas during decision-making. More opportunities to work autonomously emerge for employees. Leaders need to offer and engage in these opportunities, provide autonomy and trust to employees. This in turn is likely to reinforce employees' influence at work. (Schwarzmüller et al. (2017)

On a macro level two dimensions of change emerged (Schwarzmüller et al. (2017))

1. **structural changes of jobs**

The higher job demands and competency requirements as well as the increased influence that employees are granted by their leaders suggest that job profiles will change in the digital age and possibly new jobs will emerge.

2. **relationship-oriented leadership**

Employees need to cope with higher job demands and competency requirements as well as more challenging work-life-dynamics. In addition, they get more influence and are expected more strongly to achieve results.

High relationship-orientation on part of leaders, such as coaching and enabling behavior, seems crucial to support employees to meet these challenges. Leaders are also required to display an increased networking behaviour, they need to organize a network to achieve best possible results. Along the same lines, teambuilding gains importance due to agile organizational structures and flexible work arrangements.

According to Stodd (2016), the digital transformation and the supporting technology that comes with it; are notably, community building and experience delivery. As a consequence, leadership becomes inherently collaborative and is about establishing communities (in agile ways around challenges and projects), moderation and support. Collaboration forms mutually beneficial relationships and builds social capital and it is part of the role of a leader to have high social capital, but also to develop this in others. Leaders have to ensure that nobody is left behind, to ensure that collaboration is fostered through great conversations and not controlled through policies and punishment. Collaboration relies on trust, clarity and fairness.

Even if the impact is not entirely visible at this stage, it is clear that the digital transformation reshapes work and leadership considerably. The AMD (2018) suspects that digital technologies will have an equal or deeper and more pervasive impact on economies and societies than the invention of the steam engine in the 18th century and railroads in the 19th century. Or as Stodd (2016) - and there are many variants on this - puts it: "What got us here won't get us through the rest of the journey."

The digital transformation, apart from IT competencies, brings a set of skills which are necessary if leaders are to thrive, for example, resilience, problem-solving skills, creativity, agility, willingness to learn, readiness to take over responsibility. Leaders need to be persons willing to empower employees and to display relationship-orientation. Development initiatives have to consider these priorities and help build competencies to efficiently work in virtual, self-organizing or cross organizational teams.

We can and should use impactful digital components to engage participants in L&D interventions as much as possible, and to make leadership development both an individual and collective experience over time. We should consider how best to weave

in digital throughout development programs. We should be very deliberate in the choice of learning channels, use live residential experiences where needed, for example to create social networks, allow for action learning, support live panel engagement, practice and feedback. The value of live time together is maximized when it is about skills/habit activation rather than 'teaching' which can largely (but not always) be done virtually.

A question that remains is how can humans be doing nothing but complex creative work all the time? Do we need a balance?

Organizational culture should be transformed to a culture of involvement, in which decisions are taken together, a culture of innovation, that ensures agility based on the acceptance of suggestions, and a culture of training, in which staff is constantly developed. To win in the future, means to look at (digital) communities, networks and partnerships not only within but also outside or organizational boundaries.

This mindset and approach of creating shared value will be key. But if this eco-system thinking is to be utilized in learning and development, we might need to consider the need to:

- involve customers, suppliers and partners (and internal talent) in panel discussions
- visit your own sites (corporate, R&D, innovation, production etc.) and experience peer discussions
- hear about your partners own digital transition and they prepare for the future
- reach out to/involve different networks

The digital transformation is potentially (many would say certainly) all-consuming in its capacity to change the way we work, and few of us have the overview fully to comprehend this. Leadership development is one strand which will be changed utterly by digital transformation. The better place to be on the journey may be in the driving seat, dictating direction, rather than the passenger seat, admiring the speed of travel.

## Our Sixth Belief is that Leadership development should be, rather than a single event, **a continuous process integrated with work.**

We have discussed elsewhere the current state of the business world, and the challenges facing organizations and their leaders. However, as we look at a Belief which is specifically about how we should approach leadership development as a process, it is worth reiterating.

Holt, Hall & Gilley (2018) assert that leaders today face a growing variety of demands due to fluctuating organizational environments and the varying role expectations of those in leadership throughout the organization (Holmberg el at, 2016). Competent, effective leaders are often lacking in organizations (Rothwell, 2010), with disastrous results. Whether the primary underlying motive is greed, a taste for personal power, a generalized inability to grasp and retain ethical standards or a sense of personal values, poor leadership has been identified as a primary reason for failures of innumerable organizations, or as a root cause of engulfing scandals such as those at Volkswagen, Bear Sterns or Enron (Reeves et at., 2012).

Intense demand for highly talented leaders, coupled with real confusion and conflict as to what constitutes talent in a leader, apparently constant high-profile organizational failures, chaotic economic swings, and rapidly changing technology and demographics are a few of the motivators that highlight the need to develop employees in-house to become effective leaders (Gusain, 2017; Higgs and Rowland, 2010). The inadequate

leadership skills of employees is recognized by many firms, some of which have responded by implementing formal training to develop their employees' competencies and enhance their performance (Day et al., 2014; Avolio et al., 2010).

It is in this febrile climate that organizations strive to find better ways to discover and develop the leaders of the future. Leadership is seen as a source of competitive advantage – in fact both a vital and a relatively inexpensive one, once organizations manage to decide what it is that constitutes the skill of leadership in order to be able to try to develop it in individuals.

Since the turn of the millennium, trends in leadership development have included both a proliferation of new leadership development methods and a growing recognition of the importance of a leader's emotional resonance with others. A growing recognition that leadership development involves more than just developing individual leaders has now led to a greater focus on the context in which leadership is developed, thoughtful consideration about how to best use leadership competencies, and work/life balance issues (Hernez-Broome, Hughes, 2012).

The research literature defines leadership development as:

- a systematic and ongoing activity rather than an events-based and single approach,
- designing and implementing an array of developmental experiences rather than merely formal training, with these experiences being meaningfully integrated with one another, and
- linking a variety of developmental practices including work itself (e.g. action learning projects) with other HR systems and business strategy.

Therefore, leadership development activity today means providing people with thoughtful, innovative, even provocative opportunities to learn from their work rather than simply taking them away from their work to learn.

The literature around leadership development tells us that this is important because developing "more and better" individual leaders is no longer the sole focus of leadership development, although it remains a critical aspect. Increasingly, leadership is defined not as what the leader does, but rather as a process that engenders and is the result of relationships - relationships that focus on the interactions of both leaders and collaborators instead of focusing on only the competencies of the leaders. Leadership development practices based on this paradigm are more difficult to design and implement than those that have been popular for the last several decades in which the objective was to train leaders to be good managers. In light of this, two themes describe the state of leadership development:

1. Leadership development increasingly occurring within the context of work
2. Critical reflection about the role of competencies in leadership development

Leadership development initiatives today typically offer performance support and real world application of skills through such methods as training programs, coaching and mentoring, action learning, and developmental assignments. Combining instruction with a real business setting helps people gain crucial skills and allows the organizations to attack relevant, crucial, real-time issues. The goal of leadership development ultimately involves action not knowledge.

The role of competencies is an evolving one. Originally competencies (which we deem to be present when the skills and/or behaviors which we associate with them are demonstrated and modelled by an individual consistently and over time) were used to capture cognitive abilities or technical competencies which role holders were deemed to need in order to succeed. More and more often in current times, competencies are used to capture behavioral skill sets, for example the competency framework developed by Goleman to capture the behaviors which would illustrate the presence of emotional intelligence. The four competencies (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management) are each home to a number of observable behaviors or skills which in turn give an observer confidence that the role holder has or is developing emotional intelligence. This can give useful structure and focus to, for example, performance reviews, which in turn then better support the continuous process of leadership development.

As learning professionals, there is much to be taken from this. For example, we would suggest that, were we to consider a continuum starting from pure classroom training and evolving over blended to social blended learning, we as an industry are still focused to too great a degree on formal training:

1. Specifically, in many organizations and/or in many designed interventions, because of the focus on the formal learning element, we tend to be lacking the full picture of leadership development: we underplay the importance of elements such as coaching, mentoring, action learning and development assignments. (elsewhere in this report, we point to compelling evidence which suggests that coaching for example is of significant help to leaders, for example in helping develop resilience, yet it is still an under-utilized tool; action learning and experiential learning, the importance of which we also emphasize elsewhere, are still not as widely used as we believe they deserve to be, to the detriment of those attempting to develop as leaders).

2. We are lacking contextualization. Leadership takes place in a context between the leader and those who are led, and in the context of engaged stakeholders, thus leadership development needs to be contextualized. Effective leadership is not simply about knowledge and competencies, but is more about emotional connectedness and joint achievements with others. A leader's ability to resonate emotionally with others is a better predictor of effective leadership than is general intelligence.

It is our firm conviction that organizations wanting to maximize the impact of their leadership development work need to make a stronger connection between leadership learning programs and other HR development approaches. In our view it is when we align our leadership learning programmes with business strategies, and when we contextualize leadership, that we as leadership learning organizations unleash the full power of leadership development.

Our **Seventh Belief** is that Changes in **the workplace of the future** (such as the development of **less hierarchical, and more diverse organizations**) should be reflected in leadership development.

Holscher (2018) says that we are facing unprecedented and fundamental technological changes. Science fiction has become a grim reality for some, but an exciting opportunity for others, and we have a choice in how we respond. These technological advances

provide us with new capabilities, but they also disrupt our world, the way we work, do business and even how we relate to each other. They challenge us to consider what it means to be human again (Schwab, 2017). Schwab calls if the Fourth Industrial Revolution, Brynjolfsson and McAfee, A. (2014) call it the second machine age, and there are numerous others who describe the disruptive times we find ourselves in in equally memorable terms. We are, in a real way, rediscovering what it means to be human and, as learning professionals, it is vital that we familiarize ourselves with these shifts and disruptions, assessing the impact they may have on, inter alia, leadership and leadership development.

Schwab (2016) says that the transformation we face will fundamentally change the way we live, work and relate to each other and that we are experiencing a fusion of technologies across the physical, digital and biological worlds. All industries are affected in one or other way, but also our culture and social lives, the way we communicate and connect with each other has changed forever. We can no more turn back to the days of snail mail and wired telephones, typist pools and filing clerks than King Canute could turn back the incoming tide. Nor should we want to do so. But we do need to reflect the changes we see around us and in our near future in the way we set out to develop leaders, or we will find ourselves developing leaders for a tomorrow which is already yesterday.

Our belief around "changes in the workplace of the future" and what this means can be captured by the term "future of work". This is a term that is used by political, economic, management, leadership and organizational literature. In recent years, the term "future of work" has emerged in literature as well as in the practical world as an attempt to characterize today's conditions in the workplace, be that at an individual (Leonhard, 2016), organizational (Boudreau, Jesuthasan, & Creelman, 2015), or industry level (Chui, Manyika, & Miremadi, 2016).

However, there is as yet no common or shared understanding beyond an acknowledgement of the significance. The term tries to explain the transformational changes which are taking place, and which will continue to take place in the workplace. The initial discussion was triggered by the ongoing automation and digitalization and the debate that technology may no longer assist humans but rather replace human work. This discussion – in soundbite form reduced to the question "have we reached peak human?", designed to challenge the potentially lazy assumption that there will always be work at all levels for all humans who actively seek employment – has huge potential consequences for leadership development: who leads and how will they lead in an automated world where "brainly" work is as susceptible to automation as manual work? How are leaders developed for this environment and what skills will these leaders require? If we do not take time to consider these questions now, before the future of work is the present of work, then before we have considered, we will surely be overtaken by the transforming speed of change.

In a data-driven and digital economy, the rules of competition are changing significantly. Central to competition is innovation. Innovation used to be relatively straightforward. It was either continuous or discontinuous: we either innovated to do things better, or we innovated to do different things. More recently, however, the innovations that really made a mark were not simply discontinuous; they were disruptive as well. Think mobile telephones, music digitization, Amazon, Uber, Air BnB. As more and more thinking comes from further and further outside the box, competitive threats are no longer coming solely from within an industry; they can come suddenly and unexpectedly from the outside, often in the form of innovative start-ups, disrupting entire industries and changing existing industry paradigms. These disrupters are entering often formerly well-shielded industry sectors extremely quickly and aggressively, often ignoring or bypassing

many of the regulatory or even cultural limitations traditional players face. Traditional strategic tools and methods are considered insufficient to deal effectively with disruption.
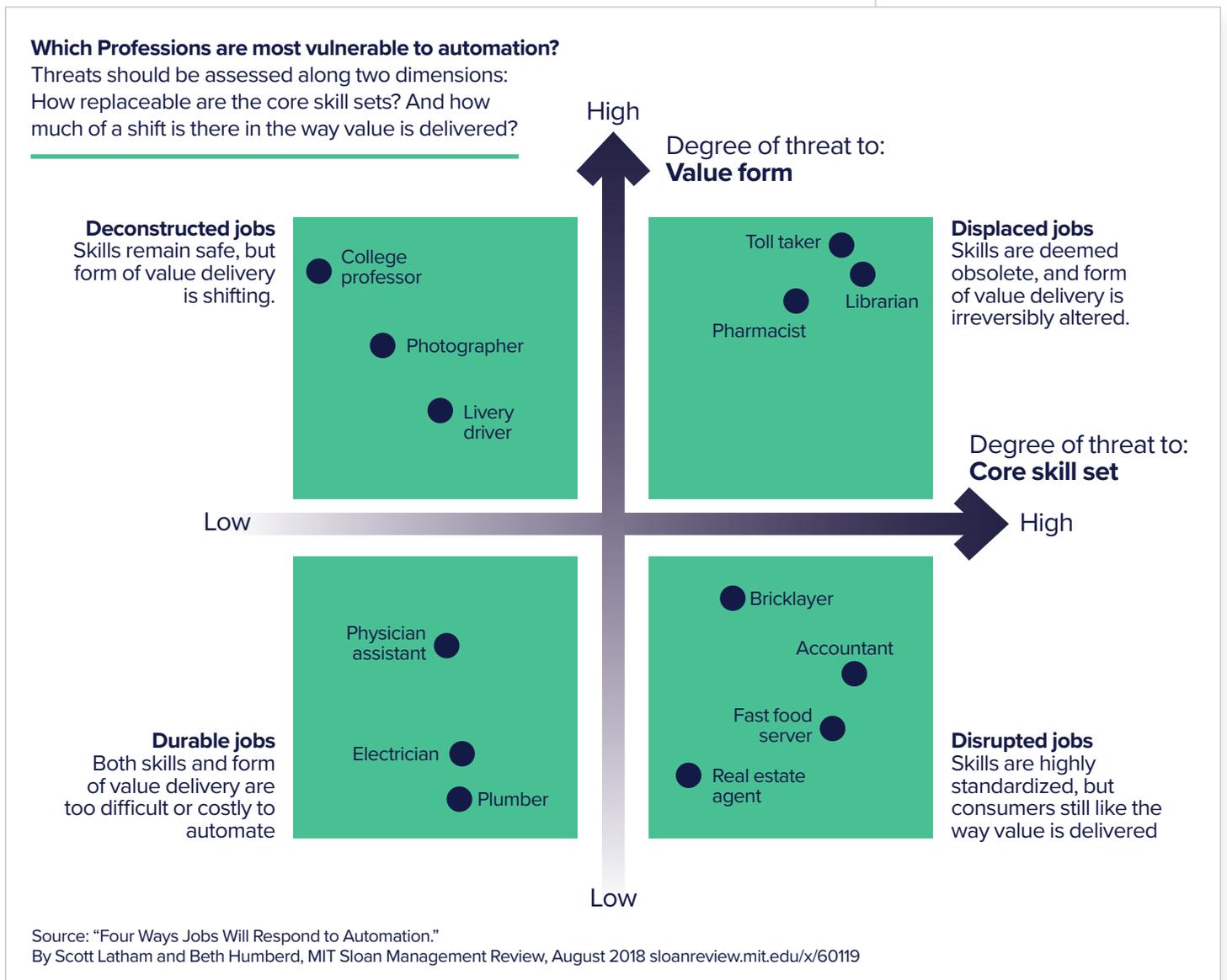
The macro trends and strategies that are shaping the future of work appear also to impact the way in which companies are organized and by whom work is executed.

Along with this evolution, organizations have to reconsider the working structure, modus and methods. This is why the topic "future of work" in organizations should focus on shaping the working world of tomorrow and address the effect of these developments on the way we are working, the working environment and the changing jobs and tasks. Organizations should deal with the following questions:

- How are our jobs evolving?
- Which skills and competencies do we need as a company and which skills and competencies does each individual employee need to develop?
- How will we be communicating and cooperating in the future?
- What will our working environment look like tomorrow?

Latham and Humbert (2018) in the MIT Sloan Management Review explore the professions which are most vulnerable to automation. They suggest that threats should be assessed along two dimensions: how replaceable are the core skill sets? How much of a shift is there in the way in which value is delivered?

**Which Professions are most vulnerable to automation?**
Threats should be assessed along two dimensions: How replaceable are the core skill sets? And how much of a shift is there in the way value is delivered?

High

Degree of threat to:
**Value form**

**Deconstructed jobs**
Skills remain safe, but form of value delivery is shifting.

College professor

Photographer

Livery driver

Toll taker

Librarian

Pharmacist

**Displaced jobs**
Skills are deemed obsolete, and form of value delivery is irreversibly altered.

Low

Degree of threat to:
**Core skill set**

High

**Durable jobs**
Both skills and form of value delivery are too difficult or costly to automate

Physician assistant

Electrician

Plumber

Bricklayer

Accountant

Fast food server

Real estate agent

**Disrupted jobs**
Skills are highly standardized, but consumers still like the way value is delivered

Low

Source: "Four Ways Jobs Will Respond to Automation."
By Scott Latham and Beth Humberd, MIT Sloan Management Review, August 2018 sloanreview.mit.edu/x/60119

The first striking thing about their graphic is that within each box there are widely varying occupations, making the point that while how we are affected may be significantly different, that we will be affected by automation seems beyond question in three of the four boxes identified. The next point is that once the principles of what constitute displaced jobs are understood, the number of examples which spring to mind are many. The implications for organizations and for leadership within organizations are plentiful.

Holscher (2018) tells us that it is, perhaps, worth reflecting that the first industrial revolution was an extension of the human muscle; we produced things and created an economy of consumers (of goods). Its success was based on an economy of scarcity, yet it resulted in a negative impact on the environment. Along with the industrial revolution came carbon emissions from vehicles and methane emissions from cattle (which are actually more harmful than the carbon emissions from cars). It is a highly competitive economy and based on the notion of 'survival of the fittest'.

The second industrial revolution is, in contrast, an extension of the human mind and has led to the development of what Holscher terms 'neo-consumerism'. It is based on the consumption of data, information and knowledge and has led to the formation of an economy of abundance and sharing, based on the notion of co-creation and transparency of information. The biggest companies in the world today are in the data and knowledge economies. The do not pollute the earth, but it may not be an exaggeration to suggest that some of them may, in part, pollute the human mind.

As Latham and Humbert's graphic illustrates, we are in a process of transition: the old mindset that informed the first industrial revolution is still alive, while a new mindset is emerging as the force behind the future technological advances. Transition is a period of volatility and of change, a time when there are often more questions than there are answers. Nevertheless, answers are what we need to explore, at least around the needs of leadership development at this period where we stand on the cusp of such significant change. The best way to find answers to the many and varied questions concerning the future of work is through joint dialogue focusing on the needs and the potential of employees. It is this dialogue which will help us to ensure that changes in the workplace of the future are reflected now in leadership development.

## Our **Eighth Belief** is that **Increased resilience**, of the individual and of the organization, should be a critical outcome of leadership development.

We believe that resilience, not only of the individual but of the organization, is a core outcome of leadership development. Great leaders develop resilience and create resilient organizations.

The resilient individual may be better able to resist the challenges of a predominantly transactional organization, but in general these organizations are harsher environments, even for the resilient, than the cultures that exist in organizations dominated by transformational leaders.

The literature tells us that resilience is a key attribute in dealing with rapidly changing and challenging situations (Lawton Smith, 2015) and the literature contains different definitions and conceptualizations of resilience. Luthans (2002) proposes that resilience is one of four essential psychological capacities for any successful leader. His quartet are completed by hope, optimism and confidence. Goleman (1996) argues that the emotional intelligence competence of self-management will help an individual to become more resilient precisely because the self-managed individual is inter alia more optimistic and

more confident.

A common route to explaining the need for resilience is the VUCA acronym. VUCA itself is a military acronym, used to describe an environment which is volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous. Grint used the acronym to help explain the concept and growth of what he termed wicked problems and their companion clumsy solutions in his chapter of that name in The New Public Leadership Challenge (2010). He had earlier (2005) explored the difference between Tame and Wicked problems. Grint sees (2010) important differences between management and leadership. Management is the equivalent of déjà vu (seen this before), whereas leadership is the equivalent of vu jàdé (never seen this before) (Weick 1973). Managers are therefore constantly solving re-emerging problems, while the leader is required to facilitate the construction of an innovative response to the novel problem, rather than rolling out a known process to a previously experienced problem. Both will require resilience, though in different forms. Recurring (managerial) problems are more likely to be in Grint's terminology Tame; they are puzzles with answers and the requirement for resilience is around their volume, perhaps, and/or the speed of required response. Wicked problems are complex – novel, a reflection of the volatility and ambiguity of the environment. There are rarely simple cause and effect reasons behind the problems. Grint (2010) offers as examples problems facing the British NHS (though not of course restricted to them) such as obesity, drug abuse and violence.

The "wickedness" of such problems is often that there is no solution – certainly no single solution. Resilience in the face of multi-faceted, inter-dependent causal links which create such wicked problems in organizations is a pre-requisite for whatever success against them leaders may enjoy. In this context, "antidotes" to VUCA have gained some currency, particularly as aides to resilience in individuals and in organizations. One such antidote is the VUCA obverse – Vision, Understanding, Clarity and Agility. Developing these traits or behaviors will, it is claimed, develop the resilience which will help to negate the VUCA impact. An alternative but similar antidote offers a rebuttal of VUCA in SCSC: Stability, Certainty, Simplicity and Clarity.

The leadership challenge – and where innovative leadership development interventions can help leaders to explore and understand – is whether what they are offering is the illusion of an antidote or the real thing. One is authentic and will be a boon to resilience. The other is going to do little other than fan the flames of volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity.

The point here is that resilience is paradoxically fragile. The idea of 'bounce-back' is common, yet authors are often vague in defining if this bounce-back reflects emotional stability, performance or something else. Some authors argue that while recovery ensures survival it may not be enough to support wellbeing, and that sustainability, with a focus on the continued positive pursuit of goals, is essential to resilience.

The breadth of debate on how to define resilience has caused some to criticize the concept as being 'poorly defined' and existing literature can be divided broadly into three strands which we can characterize as:

- asset - the seeing and building of resilience as a personal asset
- systemic – the seeing of resilience as a system-based benefit that can be developed and offered
- developmental – the seeing of resilience as a developmental skill set.

The PsyCap model of four psychological capabilities agrees with the Goleman view that leadership resilience can be enhanced through personal growth. It is not surprising then that coaching for resilience has become a topic of considerable interest in recent

years as a way to support leaders in dealing with the challenging working environment and often highly volatile organizational settings. (Palmer, 2013; Sherlock-Storey, Moss & Timson, 2013)

There is growing research-based evidence that coaching can enhance resilience. Evidence is to date broadly qualitative, and there is need of a longitudinal study to confirm the evidence of small-scale work. However, the assertion that coaching builds resilience does seem to hold up when researched in small scale studies (Grant, Curtayne & Burton, 2009; Sherlock Storey et al, 2013). The evidence suggests that resilience can be enhanced proactively in the working context through approaches that are also common in coaching. Research confirm that leaders reported a clear perception that coaching they had received had helped their resilience.

While the research findings might be seen as a positive additional coaching contribution, the research suggests that the coaches themselves are not aware of the consequences of their interventions. The findings revealed three key areas that can help coaches understand how their clients might make meaning of this construct, and thus help create a joint understanding during coaching. Firstly, the leaders described resilience as more than just 'bounce back' and highlighted alternative approaches used in relation to the past, present and future. Secondly, resilience was experienced as a 'fuel system' and described with similar properties of depletion and replenishment. Thirdly, this 'fuel system' was influenced by personal values.

We think that there are important things to take from this. The findings have been brought together in a coherent framework that coaches could use based on both capacity and capability.

Leaders commonly described resilience as 'fuel' and spoke of limited resources under certain conditions. This is referred to as the capacity to be resilient that is by nature a transient quality. There would also appear to be a role for values in achieving access to this capacity. However, in order to function effectively resilience also requires a number of skills and attributes that were identified as capabilities that once learnt are more enduring.

These capabilities could be grouped by their relevance to the past, present or future in order to more clearly explain to leaders the link between often very diverse attributes.

Leaders often came to coaching as the result of facing a challenge, and experienced significant experiential learning in relation to their resilience, as a by-product of coaching. While the development of certain cognitive strategies proved helpful, participants expressed the importance of the supportive coaching relationship during times of challenge where resilience was required.

In addition, leaders reported that coaching helped in five entwined ways (Lawton Smith 2015) It helped them reclaim their self-belief, contributed to their learning, helped them see the wider perspective, provided a supportive relationship and gave them thinking space.

**Self-belief.** Even leaders who are very senior and may have previously demonstrated exceptional confidence may need interventions to re-build self-confidence. The level of challenge may need to be reduced with a higher focus on validation and support.

**Learning.** Maintaining a focus on learning by directing attention to create holistic learning about self, others and personal strategies may prove more valuable that just teaching cognitive strategies. While tools and techniques might prove useful, personal learning seems more valuable.

**Seeing the wider perspective.** It appears that pressure can narrow the focus of attention

for individuals so continued attention to the wider system, other potential points of view and alternative perspectives can be helpful.

**Supportive relationship.** Highlighting the independence and neutrality of the coaching space and allowing emotional expression may reduce the resources occupied in the suppression of feelings.

This may give benefits through the release of energy.

**Thinking space.** Maintaining and protecting the private thinking space that focuses on personal needs rather than just problem solving is important. While leaders are busy and are often overly focused on the needs of others and taking action, they need to understand the benefit of the personal reflective space that coaching can provide. While counterintuitive this 'time-out' may ultimately provide a solution that might never have emerged from endless rumination and analysis

We know that resilience helps leaders to manage and cope with uncertainty and ambiguity and to lead others through it. But do we often enough really measure the level of resilience shown by our leaders? Do we undertake work to understand if our leaders transmit the stress they feel to others or manage to filter it out? Do we know which of our leaders punish errors and which really understand that every mistake is a learning opportunity?

There is much that the wider organization can do to help foster resilience in individuals. Supporting a culture of "learning through error" is important. People learn more through experiencing error and failure (double loop learning) than they do through experiencing success – yet to few organizations give individuals permission to fail.

Organizations can also do more to measure and monitor resilience in their people. This might include keeping better track of the number of cases of "burn-out" being encountered across the organization, and/or noting the attrition rate within the organization, and/or the general data around sickness, leaves of absence and other measurements which might suggest that the general ability of individuals "to cope" was increasing or decreasing. Millennials in particular may be vulnerable here, expecting, as so many do, immediate results, immediate compensation, immediate success, gratification, reward, forward momentum. The painful reality of a fiscally constrained environment may require reserves of resilience they have had no need to call upon before.

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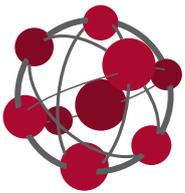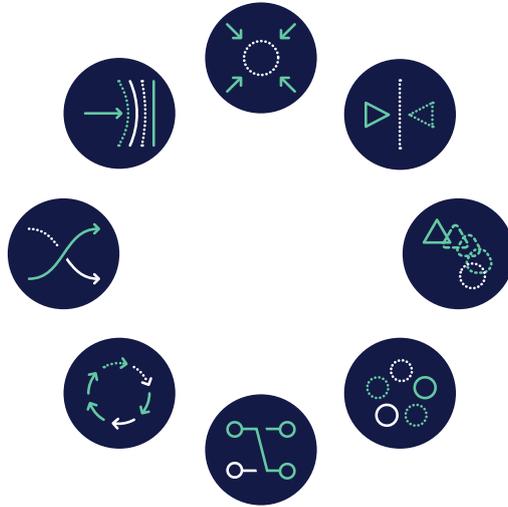
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