PATHWAYS TO PARTNERSHIP

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LEADERSHIP
CIRCLE®

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INTRODUCTION

Organizations today are moving in a common direction. For years, we have been ambivalent in this country about the need for a more participative form of management. Recently, however, a clear consensus has emerged that wholesale involvement at all levels is one of the keys to success in the future. We are moving away from top-down patriarchal organizations, where a few people take responsibility for the success of the business, to a much more bottom-up, self-managing organizational structure. In this new organization, everyone takes responsibility for the success of the business and participates in both its rewards and its decision-making process.
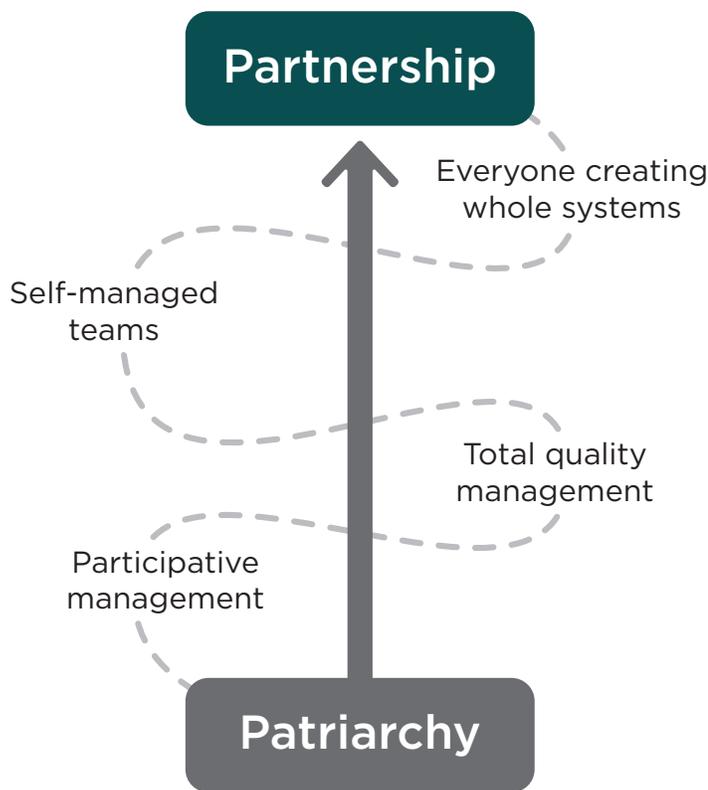
Many organizations today are well into this transition. Many are just beginning the journey, and some are still at the starting gate. This paper is not intended to convince you to embark on this journey. It assumes that, if you are considering this workshop, you are already on the way or are already committed to moving in the direction of empowerment. No matter where your organization is along this path, the going is often tough. I created this workshop because I see organizations getting stuck at one place in particular during the transition.

Pathways to Partnership is about how, despite the best of intentions, people in the organization block their own progress. The need for a workshop such as this came to me as a surprise. I was at the time working with a very senior manager who could easily be described as an enlightened leader—someone deeply committed to changing the organization, to empowering people, to moving decision-making down, and to extraordinary customer service through the involvement of everyone in the organization. His behavior, however, surprised me. He was managing the way he used to manage, while talking a lot about empowerment.

The workshop comes out of many similar experiences—of working closely with people at all levels who are committed to empowerment, and watching them fall into old patterns of behavior (over-control at the top, caution in the middle, blaming from below, etc.) that undermine the change effort. These behaviors lead to mixed messages, which in turn create a climate of caution in the organization. As a consequence, people at every level avoid taking the change effort seriously. They sit on the sidelines, waiting to see which way the wind will eventually blow. The issue is seldom the degree of commitment (or the intention) but rather the tenacity of old behaviors.

Partnership

Everyone creating whole systems

Self-managed teams

Total quality management

Participative management

Patriarchy

I was even more surprised, as I worked with people committed to change, to see people use old behaviors without being aware of it. The inconsistencies between their behaviors and the direction of change were not at all obvious to them. I thought that, because they were committed, their behavior would naturally follow suit. That this does not happen suggests that we are so familiar with patriarchal, top-down systems that we are blind to the many ways in which we continually "act out" that system. When we try to change the system, we run smack into ourselves. We are the primary obstacles. Furthermore, we do not even notice that we are in the way. Pathways to Partnership is designed to go after the ways we behave that continue to maintain control at the top and dependency at the middle or bottom of the organization.
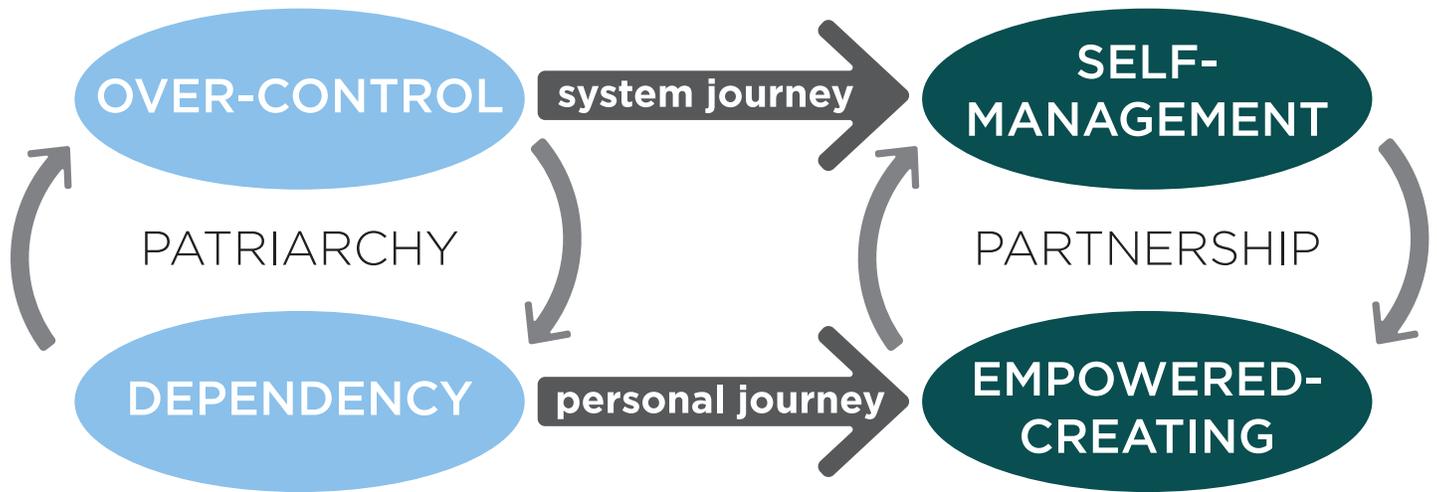

Moving from patriarchy to partnership requires navigating two journeys simultaneously—the system journey and the personal journey. Historically, we have spent most of our attention on changing the system and relatively little on the profound personal changes required of people at every level. We have tried to change organizational culture as if it is somehow separate from ourselves. We try to change it and not us. My observation, over the past ten years of watching organizations try to change their culture, is that the deeper work of change is internal. It has to do with the part of us that needs control and the part of us that hangs onto dependency. The deeper work is discovering how we personally contribute to the very culture we are trying to change.

THE CONTROL-DEPENDENCY CYCLE

There is a whole series of reciprocal, self-reinforcing behaviors that keep organizations stuck in old patterns. When we look down from within the organizational pyramid, we tend to act one way. Looking up triggers
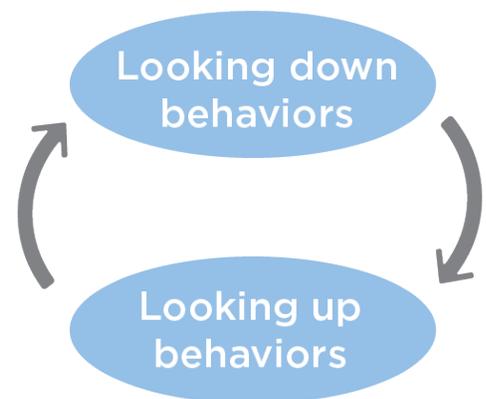
another set of behaviors. The behavior associated with looking down is supported by the behavior associated with looking up, and vice versa. They are linked in a cycle; A causes B, which causes A. Each party contributes to the other's behavior, yet it is far easier to see the other's culpability than to see your own part in the cycle.
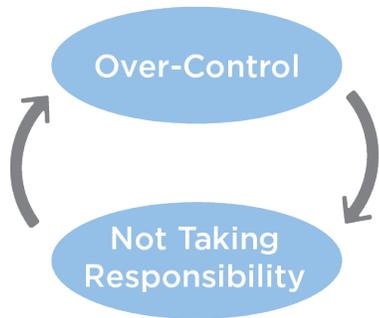
Taking/Denying Responsibility

Looking down, we tend to take too much control. That is, managers, who are genuinely committed to empowerment, unconsciously and reflexively continue to take over, take control, step into delegated decisions, concern themselves with detail they don't need to be concerned about, and withhold authority that was promised. Looking up, we tend to take too little responsibility for the success of the business; we expect those above to have all the answers and to walk their talk immediately; we wait for mixed messages to clear up before we act; and we excuse all this by saying, "The mess we are in is not my fault. If the people above me would get their act together, change would proceed." These two behaviors are linked in a selfreinforcing cycle. Taking too much control while talking about empowerment encourages those below to avoid taking the change effort seriously and accepting responsibility for its success. It allows them to continue a dependency on those at the top. It is hard to delegate responsibility to people who seem to lack commitment. The lack of initiative by those below encourages those above to continue taking control.

Aggression and Caution

Looking down, some managers continue to act in aggressive/defensive ways—pushing and confronting aggressively—that hurts others and encourages caution. When we look up, we tend to be preoccupied with caution. Caution in organizations goes way beyond what is rational. We fear falling out of favor with those above. This fear is the primary obstacle to the risk-taking required to change the system. Caution leads to manipulation and limits authentic autonomous action. We focus on waiting for a safe culture in which to act with greatness (Block, 1987). People spend energy managing their political future rather than taking action to create what is best for the organization. Again, this is a self-reinforcing cycle. Aggression encourages caution, and caution supports aggression (by not confronting its inconsistency with the new culture).
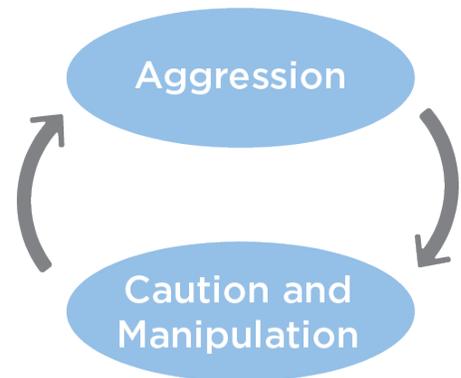
Mistrust, Secrecy and Blame

When we look down, we are influenced by the mistrust and secrecy that characterizes hierarchical systems. We are reluctant to share financial data, pertinent information, bad news, and difficult times. We believe that if people really knew this, they couldn't handle it or would not use it responsibly. Looking down, we are also reluctant to share our humanity, vulnerability, uncertainty, confusion, and not knowing. We believe that feelings, the personal side of life, have no place in the business. Furthermore, we would look bad ("Never let them see you sweat") and lose support and credibility if we shared how we really felt. Looking up, we have a bias for mistrust. As soon as someone is promoted from the ranks, they become suspect. People below are wounding the people above them by blaming, putting them under a microscope, and expecting them to perform flawlessly. We believe that our mistrust and anger at the people above us is justified. We often fail to notice how our mistrust is a response to our own powerlessness, to the power we have given up in our preoccupation with caution, and to our refusal to take responsibility. Mistrust from below encourages secrecy and invulnerability above and vice versa.
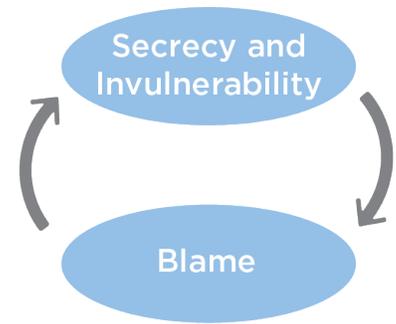
Over-Extension and Helplessness
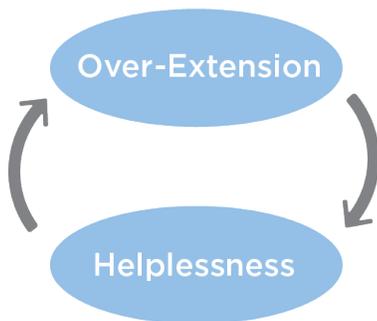
Top managers today privately tell us they are exhausted and over-extended. We are simultaneously cutting resources and expanding organizational commitments. We hear the growing despair and disenchantment in statements like, "How much can I give? No matter how much I give, it is not enough." People below are experiencing the same kind of exhaustion, but it comes more out of their helplessness. Everything is a priority, and they are too cautious to say no, set reasonable priorities, and confront limits. Consequently, there is a growing sense of helplessness and an inability to really make a difference.

Looking down, leaders tend to establish new vision without a serious inquiry into the behavioral changes that are required to support the new vision. Then they blame others for not being aligned, not buying in, or lacking commitment, all the while failing to notice that these are consequences of the missing behavioral changes. Looking up, people at the top all too quickly become scapegoats for everything that is not working. Blaming is the easiest way to excuse ourselves from responsibility. There is a personal development challenge for everyone if we are to succeed in breaking with old patterns. We naturally resist this deeper, more personal learning because finding out how we need to change can be painful.

I point out these issues not to be harsh or cynical. I encounter all of them in organizations that are truly enlightened and serious about change. These behaviors and their self-reinforcing relationship

to each other are a vestige of the past. They were "normal" in the old system, and they stand out today because they are out of harmony with the new system. Facing them is an inevitable part of navigating the organizational journey from patriarchy to partnership. If we ignore the personal work of changing these behaviors, we put our vision of an empowered organization in jeopardy.

THE DECIDEDLY PERSONAL FOCUS OF THE WORKSHOP

There is a lot of discussion about leadership and management styles today. The term "style" seems to indicate that we should be able to change it quickly or easily, as we change the style of our clothing or the cut of our hair. My experience is far different. Our leadership stance and orientation toward the organization is much more resistant to change than the word "style" would lead us to believe. Change is possible, but it takes deliberate work. I am convinced that these behaviors and stances are habits—habits that have their roots in the very way we have organized our consciousness. We have all grown up in a patriarchal society and have learned hierarchical ways of thinking about ourselves in relationship to others, to work, and to organizations. We drink it in. It becomes a part of our consciousness without our being aware of it. In that context, we have all drawn conclusions in our lives about what makes us valuable, worthwhile, and safe in this hierarchical world. These conclusions form the very structure of our character and have a powerful influence on how we think, feel, behave, lead, and follow. These habits of behavior, then, are deeply rooted in us, and only deep insight and personal development will effect a change.

Pathways to Partnership is designed to do just that. It is designed to help people reflect deeply on their leadership stance. The workshop is based on the premise that the culture we are trying to change is in us. We are all carriers of the old culture. For too long we have been trying to change it and not us. So, the focus of this workshop is decidedly personal. The context of the workshop is the role-transition leaders find themselves in as the system changes. We discover the extent to which our behavior supports the old culture, learn about the psychological underpinnings of that behavior, and identify new, more empowering behavior.

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

Two Opposing Character Structures

Pathways to Partnerships based on another premise—all behavior has its roots in ways of thinking which I call beliefs. We all have beliefs about how we must relate to the world in order to survive, how we establish our self worth, identity, and pursue our future. Beliefs form the structure of our consciousness and/or character. Many of these beliefs were formed when we were young and, for the most part, inexperienced thinkers. Therefore, some of our core beliefs are flawed. Flaws in our belief structure lead to the kind of ineffective behaviors described above. To change habitual, well-ingrained behaviors requires in-depth reflection and work at the level of our belief structure. Superficial, behavioral, and prescriptive training is relatively impotent to effect the change that is needed.

EXPANSIVE-CONTROLLING

Excel
Achieve
#1
Control
Dominate
Win

=

**Worth
Identity
Safety**

=

Accepted
Pleasing
Loved
Meeting
Expectations

DEPENDENT-COMPLYING

The nature of the beliefs we hold determines our basic character and our strategy for interacting with the world. Karen Horney (1945) described two primary directions people take in organizing their core beliefs. One direction I will call the "expansive-controlling character structure." While the issue of top-down control is much talked about, little in-depth work was done on this issue until Kaplan (1992) used this character structure to explore the nature and pitfalls of senior leadership in his book, *Beyond Ambition*. The other, I will call a "dependent-complying character structure." There is a great deal written about this structure. (See Block, 1987, and just about anything on the issue of codependency.) Each character structure has its strengths and weaknesses, and the two are similar and dissimilar in some very important ways.

These two character structures share a similar foundation. Each has formed its basic beliefs around the same core issues. As young children, our deepest concerns have to do with survival and identity. The questions we asked of life were, "Can I survive in this world of big and powerful others? Am I safe, or is the world a dangerous place? Do I have what it takes to take care of myself? Am I worthwhile? Does anybody care about me? Am I a lovable person? Am I good? Do I have a future?" These are the existential concerns of early life. Early experiences in our families, close relationships, schools, and etc. help us form conclusions to these questions. Our conclusions determine whether we move in the direction of an expansive-controlling character structure or a dependent-complying character structure.

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These two character structures are fundamentally alike, because they are strategies we adopt in response to the same core issues. But the way we answer the central questions, the beliefs we adopt, and the behavioral strategies that flow from these beliefs are very different—opposite, in fact.

The expansive-controlling person experiences the world and forms beliefs, which sound something, like, "It is a hostile world out there, a struggle of all against all, where rewards are scarce, where there are big and powerful people, and where only the strong survive." (Horney, 1945). Given that experience of the world, this person makes the expansive-controlling choice and concludes that, "I will depend entirely on myself. I must become big and powerful to establish my identity, safety, and future. I reject my helplessness and vulnerability and will triumph over others. I will take charge, control, win, and/or excel over others. If I can do that, I will be safe and worthwhile. If I cannot do that I may not survive." (Horney, 1945).

The dependent-complying type looks out at the same hostile world of big and powerful people and makes essentially the opposite decision. Whereas the expansive-controlling type chooses to depend exclusively on him/ herself, the dependent-complying type concludes that, "I am dependent on these big and powerful others to provide me with identity, safety, and my future." (Horney, 1945). Whereas the expansive-controlling type rejects helplessness and vulnerability, the dependent-complying type concludes, "I must accept my helplessness and vulnerability by submitting to others, especially powerful others. I have to please them, fit in, meet their expectations, and gain their love and protection. If I can do that, I will be safe and worthwhile. If I cannot do that I may not survive." (Horney, 1945).

Expansive-Controlling	Dependent-Complying
• Excelling	• Meeting Expectations
• Achieving	• Fitting in
• Dominating	• Submitting to others' needs
• Competing	• Pleasing
• Winning	• Playing by the rules
• Controlling	• Belonging
• Being:	• Being:
Aggressive Strong Tough Invulnerable Right	Sensitive
On top	Protected
Number one/One-up Better/More than others	Needed
• Etc.	Taken care of
	Liked
	Loyal
	Loved
	Respected
	• Etc.

Depending on how our core beliefs are organized, we choose the expansive-controlling path or the dependent-complying path. Each is outlined below. As you read, notice how each is a way of establishing identity and safety, but the strategies are mirror-image opposites.

The inherent flaw in each of these character structures is linking our very survival and identity to some form of external achievement or validation. We believe that self-worth, safety, and our future depend on always being or getting 'X' (where 'X' is any one or a number of items on the above lists). This link makes these strategies compulsive. Compulsive means we must act them out

LEADERSHIP CIRCLE

(the behaviors in the lists above) or face dire consequences—the loss of safety and identity. The compulsive nature of these strategies leaves little room for free choice, and, in effect, we become slaves to them (Hurley, Dobson, 1991). We *cannot not* act this way. A lifetime of acting this way makes these behaviors habits; and, because we have achieved some measure of success, love, and security, we have more than enough evidence to prove that our beliefs are true, that our character structures work, and that to deviate from our strategies would be foolhardy.

It is important to point out that the beliefs and the strategies we adopt in response to our core beliefs are unconscious. Most of us (unless we have become experienced at self-reflection and inner work) are not aware of the compulsive nature of much of our behavior. Nor are we aware of the inherent flaws in our belief systems; flaws that, if corrected, would allow for a broader choice of behaviors from one situation to the next.

It is also important to point out that each character strategy leads the person to develop some very valuable and admirable qualities. The expansive-controlling type serves others and the organization by mastering the ability to achieve results, push for aggressive growth, accomplish important priorities, organize vast resources toward the accomplishment of a worthy objective, etc. Organizations need this type of drive in order to be successful in a competitive marketplace. The dependent-complying type becomes loyal, hard working, gifted at creating harmony, sensing others' needs, helping and supporting others, etc. Organizations need these qualities as well, so that people can work together. Each stance has its own strengths and gifts.
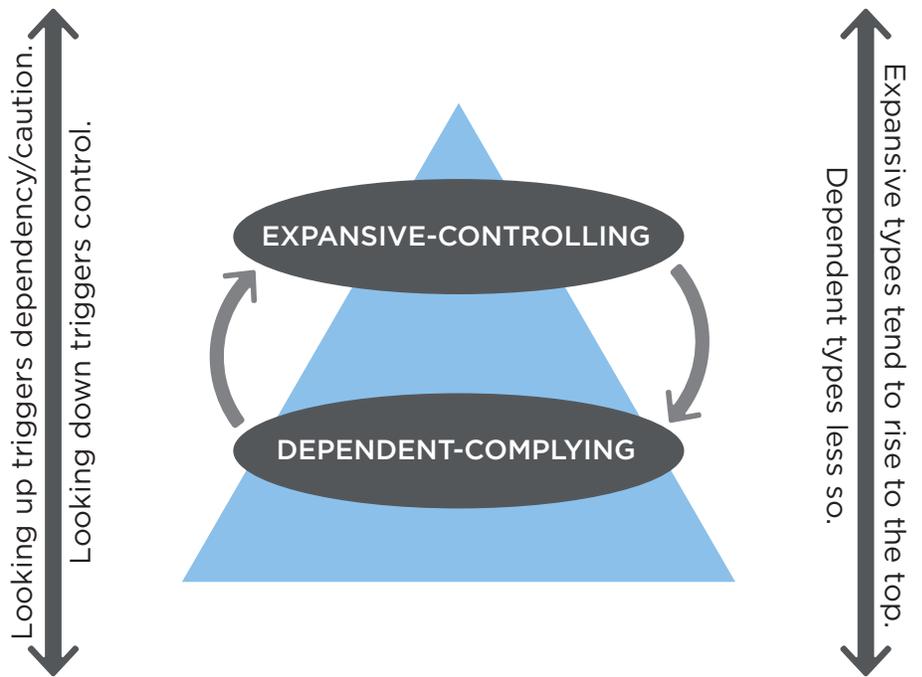
The problem of each stance is not its strength, but the over-reliance on that strength. The linkage of that gift to safety and identity leads to compulsive over-development of certain qualities and underdevelopment of others. Furthermore, it feels threatening to develop qualities that seem to be the opposite of those linked to safety and identity. Consequently, we become tied to one strategy and lack the flexibility of behavior required in many situations. In addition, when our primary strategy gets threatened, we tend to respond in counterproductive ways. For example, when an expansive-controlling type, with a need to always be seen as right, has his or her ideas challenged, he or she is less likely to respond by listening to the other's point of view (one of the strengths of a dependent-complying type), than by aggressively putting the other person down. This counterproductive behavior, and overuse of certain behaviors, limits our effectiveness.

I am convinced that much of what blocks organizational change is rooted in the way we have organized our character structure. The self-reinforcing behaviors (described earlier in the control-dependency cycle section) represent the downside of each character strategy and tend to block the organization's transition from patriarchy to partnership. If you compare the behaviors ascribed to each character structure (listed above) with the description of how we tend to behave looking up or down in the pyramid, you will notice a striking correspondence. Patriarchy is the natural result of how our compulsive character structures relate to each other. If we do not deal with this compulsive behavior, we are bound to continue recreating patriarchal relationships and systems, even though we may talk about our vision of empowerment.

How does all this help to create and maintain patriarchal organizations? Kaplan (1991) observes that expansive-controlling types tend to move up in the organization. The strengths they have developed are ready-made for senior levels. In addition, they are driven to move up. Because their self-esteem is often related to their altitude in the pyramid, they *cannot not* move up. So, they work unceasingly to advance, to succeed, to expand their power base, etc., all of which serves the organization's need for people who will expand, push aggressive agendas, grow the organization,

and step up to the rigors and demands of leadership. Consequently, the top levels in most organizations are populated predominantly by expansive-controlling types.

Dependent-complying types tend not to move up as readily. They do not measure self-worth in the same way that expansive-controlling types do. As such, they are not as driven to move up. Also, because self-assertion may not get them liked (which is how they measure their self-esteem and security) they have not developed the repertoire of behaviors that seem natural to expansive-controlling types. Consequently, they do not end up in senior positions. Instead, they populate middle and lower levels and serve the organization by their loyalty, hard work, and dedication to doing what is right and meeting the expectations of others.

Looking up triggers dependency/caution.
Looking down triggers control.

Expansive types tend to rise to the top.
Dependent types less so.

EXPANSIVE-CONTROLLING

DEPENDENT-COMPLYING

This natural selection process that pushes expansive-controlling types up and dependent-complying types to lower levels leads directly to patriarchal relationships and systems. The habitual/compulsive nature of the two stances interacts in such a way that hierarchical/ patriarchal relationships inevitably result. People at the top take most of the responsibility and control, while people at the bottom say, "It is not my job to take responsibility. That is your job. My job is to do what is expected." It is important to note that in this exchange, both types get their compulsive needs met. The expansive types feel safe and worthwhile because they are in control and on top, and the dependent-complying types feel safe because they do not have to risk being controversial and taking responsibility. The expansive-controlling types feel justified in taking control because they do not see those below them taking risks and making the tough decisions. Dependent-complying types feel valued because they are doing what is expected of them—and doing it well. The relationship is reciprocal. Each type does its part in maintaining the patriarchal cycle, and both types are unconscious of how they "must" continue to maintain that system in order to continue using their compulsive strategies. Both would feel at risk and devalued if the game were to change.

THE PATH OF CHANGE

As we move toward self-managing organizations, people at the top are challenged to let go of their compulsive need for control. This is asking a lot, given the way they have organized their character structure. We are also asking people in the middle and lower levels of the organization to let go of dependency, to begin to assert themselves, to act more autonomously, to confront tough issues,

and to take responsibility for creating the future. This is also asking a lot, given the way they have organized their basic stance in life. The direction of organizational change challenges each type to act in ways that contradict their basic character structure. When this happens, it is natural for both types to feel at risk, awkward, vulnerable, not useful, etc. As these feelings arise, it is easier and more comfortable to revert to old patterns of behavior. However, when we do this, we move away from our future by not "walking our talk." We run smack into the most significant obstacle on our journey towards the new organization—ourselves.
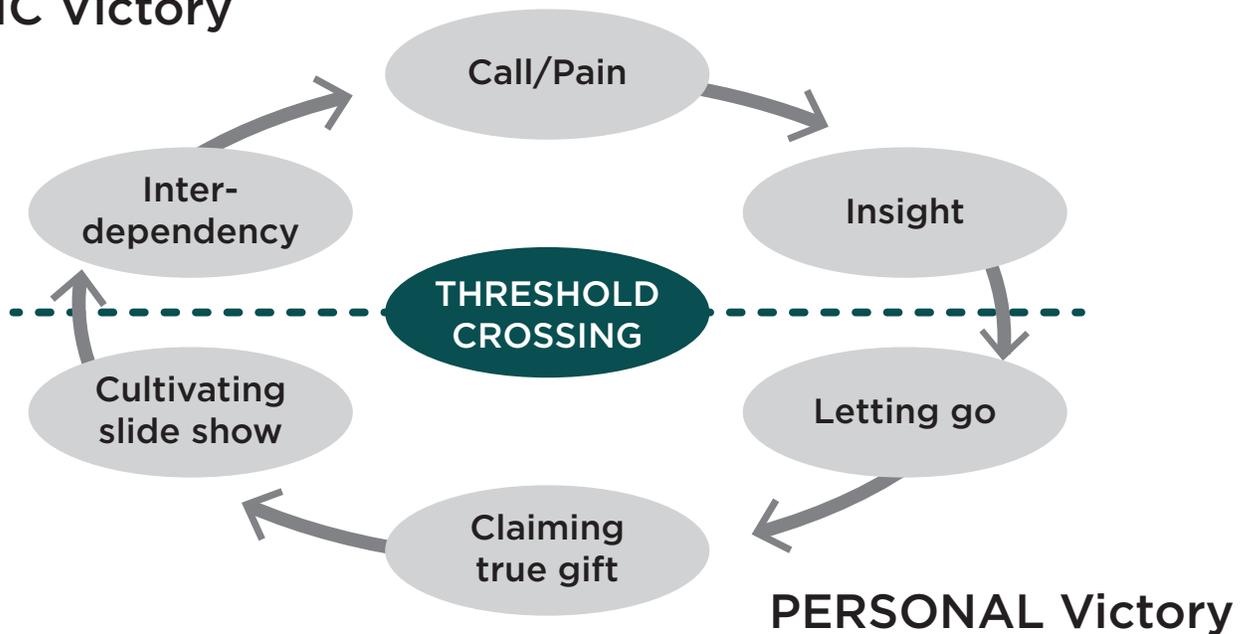
Given our character structures, the journey of transformation is different for each type. Ultimately each type needs to move toward a more interdependent way of working, leading, and living. The steps for achieving interdependence, however, are different for each type. Dependent-complying types need to move toward autonomy, and expansive-controlling types need to move toward intimacy. This feels vulnerable for each type.

JOURNEY	Insight	Letting Go	Claiming the True Gift	Cultivating the Shadow Side	Inter-dependence
Dependent-Complying	Approval seeking and Caution	Using approval to get safety, love, respect	Support others' needs for its own sake, not at others' expense	Learn to say no. Take own stand. Confront	Support and confront
Expansive-Controlling	Over-control and Achievement	Using succesful task accomplishment and being in charge to measure worth and safety	Achieve for joy and service, not at the expense of others' self-expression	Listening relationships. Vulnerability. Support	Achieving. Listening. Asking for help
SYSTEM JOURNEY	PATRIARCHY →　　　　　　　　　　　　　　PARTNERSHIP				

The first step on the journey is to let go of the bargain we have made with life; that is, we stop using our strengths and gifts as a strategy to prop up our security and identity. We offer them as appropriate to the situation and as an act of service with no strings attached. The expansive-controlling type, for example, continues to achieve, but not at the expense of self and others, and not as a strategy to gain admiration, approval, promotion, security, etc. Achievement is pursued for the love of doing it and/or because the results are needed. The dependent-complying type who has become masterful at sensing and responding to others' needs, for example, continues to offer this gift, but not at the expense of his/her autonomy and not as a strategy to gain love and security. So the first step for each type is to claim the true gift of their type and detach the strings of safety, self-worth, and identity. These strings keep us compulsively tied to one strategy when the situation may require another kind of action. When we free ourselves from these compulsive strategies, we do not lose the gifts we have developed in pursuit of that strategy, but gain a greater repertoire of behaviors and self-expression.

The second step on the journey is to move into the opposite side of ourselves and to cultivate the "shadow" part of ourselves, those parts of ourselves we have left dormant or underdeveloped. The expansive-controlling types' work is to develop the relational, sensitive, feeling, and other-centered skills that the dependent-complying types have mastered. The dependent-complying types' work is to develop autonomy. This means learning skills related to assertiveness, confrontation, self-promotion, and achievement—skills that the expansive-controlling types are good at. As the opposite side of ourselves is developed, we gain the freedom to deploy ourselves in whatever way is authentic and most serves the higher vision we are pursuing. This movement into our shadow side also creates the ability to function in a truly interdependent way.

PUBLIC Victory

Call/Pain
Inter-dependency
Insight
THRESHOLD CROSSING
Letting go
Cultivating slide show
Claiming true gift

PERSONAL Victory

Our compulsive strategies are essentially self-centered. We focus on getting our compulsive needs met. Interdependence is other-centered. It is a special relationship between people and groups of people where we focus on the higher good of those involved or affected by the action of the group. For our organizations to function in this way, members need to have a broad repertoire of skills. We need to courageously confront difficult issues in a compassionate way. We need to take clear positions and advocate strongly for them, while simultaneously inquiring deeply into the other's position. We need to focus on task achievement and build trusting, caring team relationships. We need to know when to take control or say no, and when to let the group struggle with discovering its own solution. We need to learn how to be vulnerable enough to learn—learn not only about how to make the new system work, but also about ourselves in the process. This is the high level of functioning that the transition from patriarchy to partnership requires. Future organizational structures will be built on interdependence. The future of our world depends on interdependence. Genuine interdependence will be attained only when people do the deeper work outlined in this paper.

Finally, this journey is a spiritual one. It is the hero/heroine's journey told in the mythic stories of cultures worldwide. It is the path suggested by our artistic and spiritual traditions for centuries. It is the frightening and liberating journey into the loss of our ego attachments, where our ego self is stripped of its illusions, and a more powerful, soulful, essential self emerges. It is the way of the leader, and the only way to create the interdependent organizations we envision.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, I have tried to show how the behavior that blocks the organizational shift to empowerment is rooted in deeper structures of consciousness. In so doing, I have described the need for a workshop like *Pathways to Partnership*. It is my conviction that organizational transition can be expedited by helping managers at all levels gain insight into the nature of their character structures. In Pathways to Partnership, managers learn how to change their beliefs, enabling them to more fully embody in their leadership the principles of the new system.

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