

LEADERSHIP EMPOWERMENT TURNING RESISTANCE INTO COMMITMENT

By Dr. D.H. Groberg —

LEADERSHIP VS. MANAGEMENT—

The biggest challenges organizations face are not in the technical side, but in the human side. These challenges center on the questions of how to overcome resistance and get the total commitment of people's full potential. This is one of the key roles of leaders, to **transform resistance into commitment**. Helping leaders acquire this ability is the essence of leadership empowerment.

Leadership and management are not the same. Management deals primarily with the technical, measurable, controllable aspects of an organization: strategic planning, organizing, staffing, delegating, controlling, and training. Leadership, on the other hand, deals with less controllable and measurable factors such as direction, vision, commitment, and integrity. Organizational effectiveness depends upon having both leadership and management and having them in an appropriate balance.

It is said that leadership addresses the question, "Where are we going?" while management addresses the question, "How do we get there?" However, leadership, because of its potential to transform resistance into commitment, may have as much to do with "How to get there" as management does—maybe more. Yet systematic leadership development is one of the most neglected areas in organizations today. Recently, more focus has been placed on management development. Now and in the future, however, leadership will constitute the key competitive edge.

THE MANAGEMENT PARADIGM—

One way to see the difference in these two processes is to contrast the steps associated with each. In most organizations, the management task consists of four steps in the following sequence:

1. Defining the organization's current reality (where we're at, or **CURRENT LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE**).
2. Formulating improvement goals and objectives (where we want to go, or **DESIRED LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE**) in relation to the organization's current level of performance.
3. Strategizing, planning, organizing, staffing, directing, promoting, controlling, training, etc., to reach the goals (what we have to do to get there, or **DRIVING FORCES**).

These first three steps can be represented by the following graph:

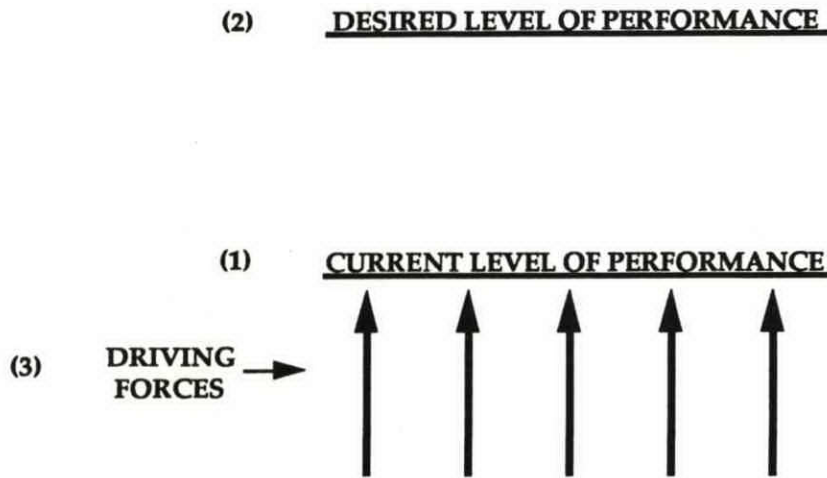


fig. 1

To the chagrin of many managers, these three steps by themselves seldom produce the desired results; something usually goes wrong. The plans, strategies, and other activities meet with resistance. This resistance takes many forms. However, resistance is almost always the result of a few basic causes which can be grouped under the label of "psychological and cultural restraining forces."

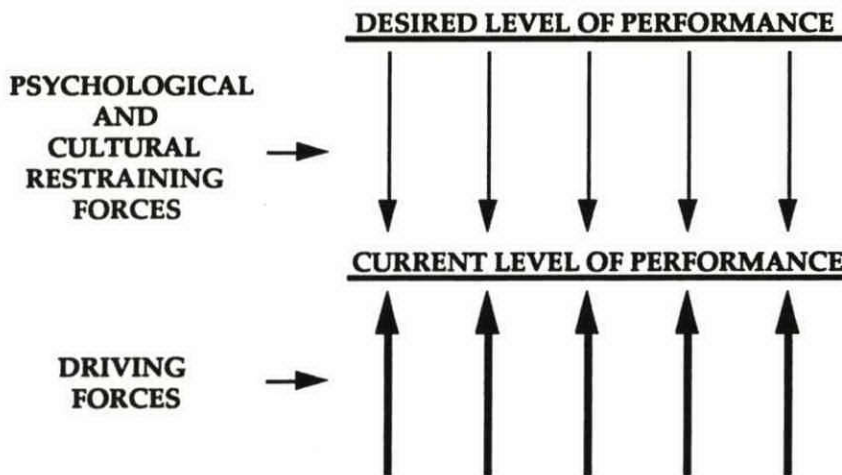


fig. 2

Because of these restraining forces, management requires a fourth step in the process:

4. Investing in and deploying more DRIVING FORCES (time, money, people, etc.) to do more planning, organizing, etc. (step 3) in order to *overcome* the restraining forces and push toward the goal. (See fig 3.)

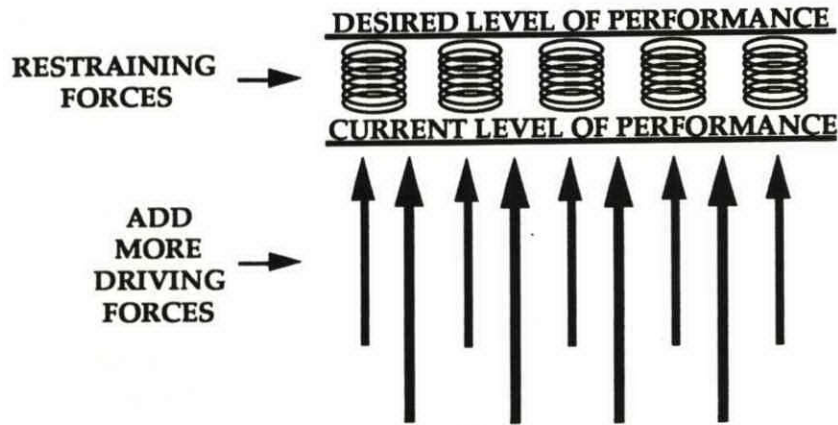


fig. 3

There are two problems with this approach. First, the restraining forces which impede the improvements don't go away. In fact, increased efforts to overcome them often exacerbate them. Still, progress towards the goal can be achieved if enough driving forces are applied long enough. But such achievement is often only the *illusion* of progress. This is because the restraining forces coil up like springs under the pressure of the driving forces. Then, when the driving forces are redeployed toward a new initiative or problem, the restraints spring back, often driving the level of performance even lower than it was originally.

The second problem with the management approach is even more serious. It is the feelings of up and down cycles it generates within people. These feelings encourage people to think "short-term," rather than "long-term" results, and create doubt and mistrust between management and employees. Employees wonder, "Does management know what it is doing? First they say, 'Do this' and it doesn't work, then they say, 'Do that' and that doesn't work." Management has similar suspicions of employees—questioning their commitment and dedication. This lack of confidence and trust expands and causes other problems. The overall result is often cynicism.

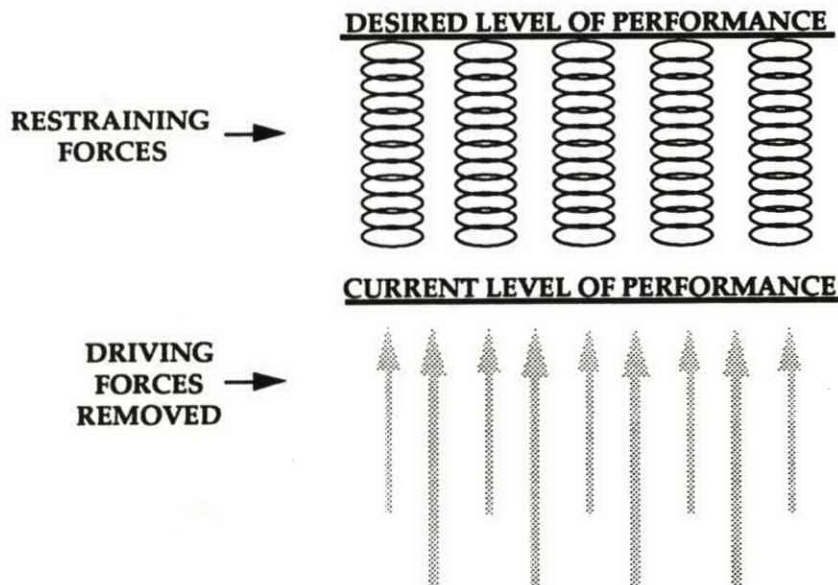


fig. 4

Charlie Kiefer described the limitations of the management paradigm as follows:

The unfortunate fact of the matter is that most planning in modern American business is done from the reactive-responsive orientation. Through elaborate methodologies the organization seeks to determine the current state of affairs it faces. It plots its current financial situation, the capacities of its people, and the products it is currently capable of creating. It examines the competitors' capacities and likely responses, as well as probable legislative actions, and so on.

Having done a thorough and complete analysis of these factors, the organization then takes the almost tragic step of charting a course to optimize performance in light of these current circumstances. In essence, the organization says, "Given these circumstances, what is the best we can hope to do?"

Instead, imagine people in an organization operating from a creative mode. They approach planning, first by determining what they truly want to create, thus in essence becoming true to themselves, and then by analyzing current reality (perhaps in exactly the same manner as before). Now, however, it is only to use that analysis as a foundation to build a bridge to what they truly want. Such an organization is on the road to greatness.

Leadership uses this creative mode described by Kiefer.

THE LEADERSHIP PARADIGM—

Let's look at the steps of leadership. Leadership involves a different sequence of activities. Also, as suggested above, some of the activities themselves are different.

1. Establish a **SHARED MISSION/VISION** with related goals and objectives. Mission implies purpose, whereas vision implies direction, magnitude, and velocity of change/achievement (i.e., where we're going; how much; how fast). This is different than simply doing more of the same. It might direct efforts toward previously unthought of objectives.
2. Assess the current state of the organization in relation to the mission/vision (or **CURRENT STATE OF ALIGNMENT**). By this we mean the degree of alignment of structure, systems, strategy, etc., with the shared mission/vision.
3. Understand the forces which will most likely resist change; that is, those psychological and cultural forces which would most likely interfere with or make it difficult to achieve the required alignment. (We refer to these as **PSYCHOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL RESTRAINING FORCES**.)

These three steps are represented in the graph (fig. 5) on the following page:

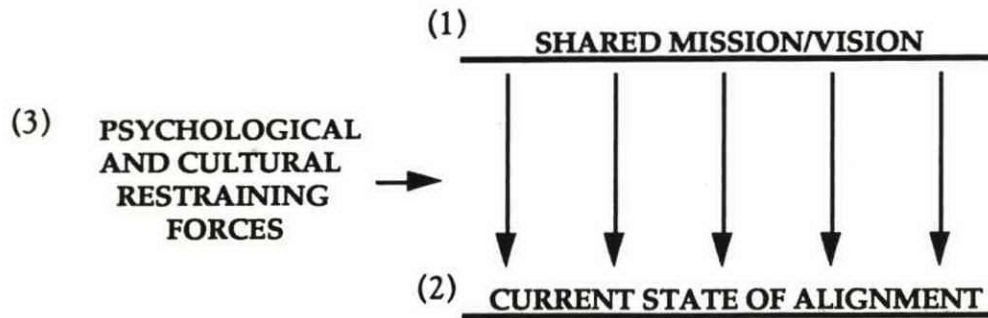


fig. 5

Once leaders understand the restraining forces which are likely to resist the changes they want to achieve, they are then prepared to take Step Four.

4. Formulate and implement AN EXPLICIT PLAN AND PROCESS which creates conditions whereby psychological and cultural restraining forces are transformed into the full *commitment* of people towards reaching the organizational vision.

Let's look at each of these four leadership tasks in more depth.

Step 1: ESTABLISH SHARED MISSION/VISION

An organizational mission is a statement of purpose which reflects the principles and values of the organization. It is a "Corporate Constitution." The vision is a statement of direction which defines what kind of organization it wants to be and what kind of results it wants to achieve in each of its key success factors. An organization without a vision will perish. But a vision that is not shared is of little value. While it may, at best, achieve compliance, it will not produce commitment. For a mission/vision to be shared, there should be meaningful involvement in creating it at all levels of the organization to which it applies. For example, the mission statement of the Covey Leadership Center is:

Our mission is to empower people and organizations to significantly increase performance capability in order to achieve worthwhile purposes through understanding and living principle-centered leadership.

Step 2: ASSESS CURRENT STATE OF ALIGNMENT

The current state of alignment is the degree of congruency or consistency among the nine dimensions of an organization. We refer to those dimensions in the PS PARADIGM (fig. 6). Organizational alignment is one of the conditions necessary to achieve and sustain high organizational performance. To the degree that each dimension of the PS Paradigm aligns with the other dimensions, the organization has high integrity, or oneness. When an organization has integrity, little energy is lost in conflict.

To the degree one or more elements are out of alignment, the organization has less integrity or oneness. Less integrity results in a less effective operation. For example, the shared mission/vision might encourage cooperation and teamwork while the compensation system rewards individual performance at the expense of cooperation. Thus, one alignment question might be, "How can our pay and compensation system reinforce and encourage the behaviors needed to successfully carry out our organization's strategy?"

Some of the deepest, most common categories of misalignment are: **Self Betrayal, Mistrust, A Control-Style Paradigm, and Incongruous Structures and Systems.** Let's look at each of these:

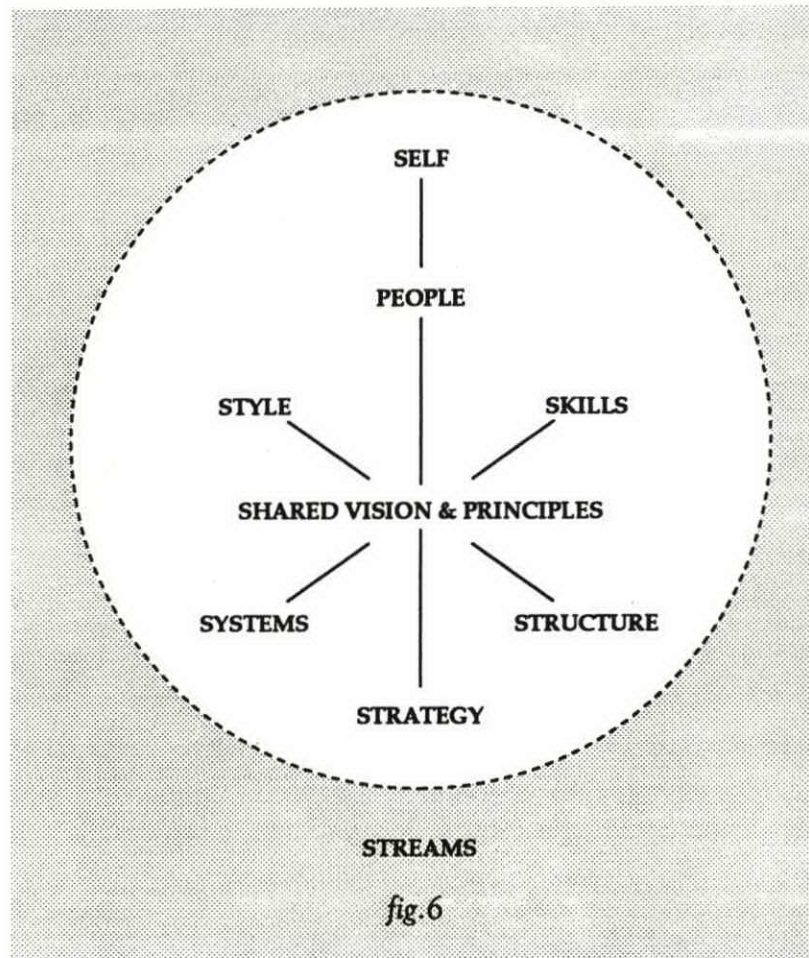
- a. **SELF BETRAYAL*** is the act of violating one's conscience in relation to others; of acting incongruently with one's own beliefs and values. It is doing something you know you shouldn't do, or not doing something you know you should do. It is evidenced by self-justification, lack of responsibility, blaming, accusing, burnout, apathy, and stagnation. Self betrayal is at the root of most of the other categories of the problems listed below.
- b. **MISTRUST** has two aspects, an inner one and an outer one. Mistrust of self is the inner aspect. Mistrust of others is the outer. Each of these aspects also has two dimensions, a trust in the integrity and fairness of either one's self or others, and a trust in the skills and competency of one's self or others. (For example, one could trust the integrity and fairness of good friends, but not trust their skills and competence to perform certain tasks.) When people mistrust themselves they tend to also mistrust others. Mistrust of self is usually the result of self-betrayal. Most problems in an organization can be traced back to mistrust of one sort or another. Mistrust is evidenced by blaming, accusing, lack of cooperation, poor communication, and excessive control. Building trust is perhaps the single most important achievement a leader can make within an organization.
- c. **A CONTROL-STYLE PARADIGM** of management views people as "things" to be manipulated rather than as resources to be developed. This results in excessive policies and procedures, lack of innovation, poor teamwork, reduced speed and quality, and increased complaining. A control-style paradigm exacerbates problems of self betrayal and mistrust as well.
- d. **INCONGRUOUS STRUCTURES AND SYSTEMS** are those which do not support—and sometimes even contradict—the purpose and direction the organization *says* it wants to go. This often results in conflicting objectives where the objectives of one employee or department conflict with another. Each makes it harder for the other to achieve his/her/its objectives so they provoke each other into evading responsibility and blaming the other. This worsens all of the above problems and results in disunity, jealousy, empire building, inter-departmental rivalries, organizational apathy, and stagnation. These incongruities inhibit quality, speed, innovation, and cooperation; and impedes commitment, enthusiasm, and synergistic problem solving.

This second task of leadership is to understand the components of the organization and constantly monitor them to assess the degree of alignment. The PS PARADIGM (fig. 6) is a useful tool for assessing and monitoring these components.

* Concept of Self Betrayal is taken from unpublished materials of Dr. C. Terry Warner, Brigham Young University.

PS Paradigm

DIMENSIONS OF ORGANIZATIONS



Step 3: UNDERSTAND PSYCHOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL RESTRAINING FORCES

Restraining forces resist change or improvement. They inhibit the realization of the organization's mission/vision and related goals and objectives. Specifically, such restraining forces represent the psychological and cultural reasons (i.e., attitudes, assumptions, and beliefs) which people use to justify their acts of self-betrayal and mistrust. Oftentimes managers define restraining forces in terms of time, money, systems, structures, policies, or physical resources. But these "things" are never the actual restraining forces. The restraining forces are in people, not "things." This is because people control time, money, budgets, systems, structures, policies, and physical resources. If we didn't have mistrust and betrayal we wouldn't have these psychological and cultural restraining forces.

So, why do people mistrust? Why do they betray their values? Generally speaking, it is because they are afraid they won't get what they want. The fundamental breakdown of integrity in organizations is caused by faithlessness — a lack of confidence in oneself, in one's values, in others, and in the organization. This faithlessness breeds fear and jealousy among people who are working together. It is aggravated by the basic paradigms people often have of themselves— inadequacy, unworthiness, and lack of power.

It is important to understand that many of the things which resist change and appear to be causes, or sources of resistance, are really only symptoms. The real causes are deeper. For example, an organization might have trouble with internal communications, teamwork, quality, turnover of employees, theft, and so forth. These are only symptoms of the deeper problems of self-betrayal and mistrust.

Understanding psychological and cultural restraining forces requires sensitive and ongoing understanding through such processes as cultural audits and empathic listening. Effective leaders know they cannot solve a problem until they understand it.

Step 4: TRANSFORM RESTRAINTS INTO COMMITMENT

Ironically, the reason most companies don't accomplish their goals is that they are focused on their goals. The more they focus on their goals, the more the psychological and cultural forces resist. Because of this, it becomes harder to reach their goals. As a result, they may even lower their sights and compromise their vision. The alternative to focusing on goals is to focus on the restraining forces that are resisting the goals. By focusing on the restraining forces, this downward spiral can be reversed and resistance can be transformed into commitment.

One of the highest achievements of leadership is to transform restraining forces into commitment. There exists a full continuum of employees' feelings toward the mission or vision of an organization. They might revolt against it. They might resist it in subtle ways. They might be neutral or apathetic towards it. They might give lip service to it. They might support certain aspects of it, or they might fully embrace and be totally committed to it. The degree to which they are committed will determine the degree to which they will further the vision.

As Thomas Watson of IBM said:

I believe the real difference between success and failure in an organization can very often be traced to the question of how well the organization brings out the great energies and talents of its people.

The degree to which energies and talents of individuals are brought out depends upon the degree of commitment of the people. In his book, *The Fifth Discipline*, Peter Senge lists seven possible stages or levels of commitment to a vision. We have added three more to the beginning of his list:

Violent Revolution: Uses forceful, confrontive actions to demonstrate opposition to the vision.

Active Revolution: Fights against vision but not in as many confrontive ways.

Passive Resistance: Opposes the vision in subtle, passive ways.

Noncompliance: Does not see benefits of vision and will not do what's expected. ("I won't do it; you can't make me.")

Apathy: Neither for nor against vision. No interest. No energy. ("Is it five o'clock yet?")

Grudging Compliance: Does not see the benefits of the vision, but also, does not want to lose job. Does enough of what's expected because he has to, but also lets it be known he is not really on board.

Formal Compliance: On the whole, sees the benefits of the vision. Does what's expected and no more "pretty good soldier."

Genuine Compliance: Sees the benefits of the vision. Does everything expected and more. Follows the letter of the law"; "good soldiers."

Enrollment: Wants it. Will do whatever can be done within the "spirit of the law."

Commitment: Wants it. Will make it happen. Creates whatever "laws" (structures) are needed.

THREE TYPES OF LEADERSHIP POWER—

Achieving the highest levels (enrollment and commitment) is one of the primary roles of a leader. In order to accomplish this, a leader must use some type of power. There are three general types of leadership power available. They are: **COERCIVE POWER, UTILITY POWER, and PRINCIPLE-CENTERED POWER.***

These are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Leadership styles are usually *blends* of all three, with one type dominating. However, each type of power has its strengths and weaknesses and each produces certain predictable results. Let's review each of these and explore the results each of these three types of power can produce, and especially how each effects the cultural restraining forces which are resisting the change:

1. **Coercive power** is based on *fear*. This power emanates from the formal authority and position of the leader. It centers on what a leader can do *to* others primarily in ways of punishment if they do not perform. Coercive power can and does get results. It can help move the line upward. But the compliance is grudging compliance, and there are two problems with it. First, results are usually only temporary. As soon as the coercion is absent, the results no longer flow. Thus Coercive power produces only an *illusion* of progress. Second, coercive power produces much negative baggage and generates additional restraining forces. It causes resentment, stifles creativity, neutralizes commitment, and even provokes revenge. Coercive power only pushes *against* the restraints; it does not remove them.
2. **Utility power** is based on *fairness*. It also emanates from formal authority and position but centers on what a leader can do *for* others. It also gets compliance. But, again, the compliance is usually only temporary. This is because when the rewards cease the compliance also ceases. Utility power often addresses the restraining forces and can help reduce, or even remove,

*Taken from unpublished materials of Dr. Blaine Lee of the Covey Leadership Center on "Power and Leadership."

some of them. By addressing and reducing restraining forces, utility power is a great improvement over coercive power. But like coercive power, it does not have the ability to *transform* restraining forces into *commitment*.

3. **Principle-centered power** is the third type of leadership power. Principle-centered power is as different from utility power as utility power is from coercion. It's the only leadership power which has the capability of doing more than reducing and removing restraining forces. Principle-centered power can *transform* restraining forces into *commitment*.

Unlike the previous two, principle-centered power is not dependent upon formal position or authority. It is not dependent upon what a leader can do to or for others. Instead, it represents what a leader can do *with* others. Principle-centered leadership is based on fundamental honesty and trustworthiness. It is the leader's honesty with others and his/her ability to effectively create the critical conditions of empowerment and alignment which will build a true and lasting commitment.

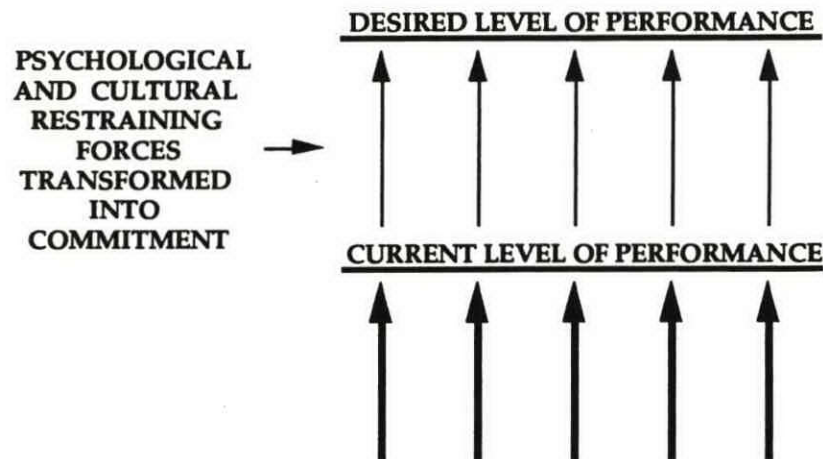


fig. 7

An old Chinese proverb by Lao Tsu says:

The wicked leader is he who the people despise.

The good leader is he who the people revere.

The great leader is he who the people say, "We did it ourselves."

The key to successfully transforming the culture of an organization is to design and implement an inside-out developmental process. The process must work at all four levels within the context of the organization's specific needs. Ideally, this process begins at the top of the organization (although it can begin anywhere), and continues until it ultimately empowers all the people. Organizational leaders should first be empowered and they, in turn, can then empower others. The process begins with the personal and interpersonal levels and progresses to the managerial and organizational levels.

Each level is associated with fundamental principles and processes which produce certain paradigms and behaviors (ie., habits of effectiveness) that transform the culture. Each level includes and is dependent upon the preceding level: trust includes and is dependent upon trustworthiness; empowerment includes and is dependent upon trustworthiness and trust; alignment includes and is dependent upon empowerment, trustworthiness, and trust.

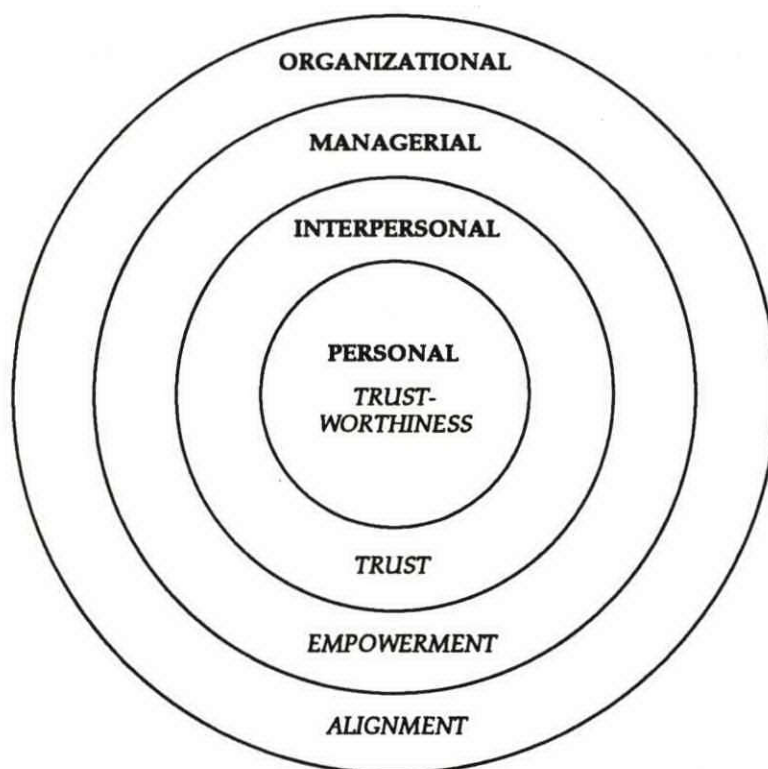


fig. 8

Transforming restraints into commitment is like removing Morning Glories from a garden. Unless the effort goes all the way to the roots, the results will be temporary at best. The problems will soon reappear and choke out changes.

Expanding on this inside-out approach, a Principle-Centered Development Matrix can be created which relates each of the four fundamental principles to basic transformational processes which address the four types of restraints through new paradigms and habits of effectiveness.

The first column describes the level and principle at work. The restraining force that is addressed is stated (in parenthesis) below the level and principle. The next column describes the transformational processes (ways to implement the changes). The third column describes the results in terms of the changes in paradigms and the specific habits applied.

(See PRINCIPLE-CENTERED DEVELOPMENT MATRIX on the following page.)

PRINCIPLE-CENTERED DEVELOPMENT MATRIX

LEVEL and PRINCIPLE:	TRANSFORMATIONAL PROCESSES: Ways to implement the changes	RESULTS: Paradigms and habits of effectiveness
PERSONAL TRUST-WORTHINESS (Addresses Self-Betrayal)	Values clarification Personal mission/vision Quadrant II self management Self renewal/life planning Etc.	Paradigms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal responsibility, congruence and integrity • Abundance Mentality • Personal effectiveness • Principle-Centeredness Habits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactivity • Begin with the End in Mind • Put First Things First • Sharpen the Saw
INTERPERSONAL TRUST (Addresses Mistrust)	Arbinger process Empathic communications Outdoor leadership labs Synergistic problem solving Profile and Feedback Conflict resolution process Etc.	Paradigms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interdependence • People vs. Things • Results through relationships Habits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think Win-Win • Seek First to Understand, Then to be Understood • Synergize
MANAGERIAL EMPOWERMENT (Addresses Control-Style)	Win-Win Agreements Work unit visioning Job enrichment Teambuilding and conflict resolution Conditions of Empowerment Etc.	Paradigms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stewardship delegation • Self management • Processes vs. Events Habits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All the Seven Habits above applied to managerial effectiveness
ORGANIZATIONAL ALIGNMENT (Addresses Incongruent Structures and Systems)	Corporate mission/vision development Strategic path finding Organizational action planning Harmonizing misalignments Conflict resolution process Designing and implementing stakeholder information systems. Etc.	Paradigms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total quality/Customer focus • Alignment • Inside-Out • Systems thinking • Organic vs. Mechanistic Habits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All the Seven Habits above applied to organizational effectiveness.

This is not a quick-fix approach. Leadership must be nurtured and developed. Like any growth process, it takes time and commitment, planning and persistence, and lots of patience, but there are specific steps which can be taken to get started as itemized above. Beginning the process is the first step which ultimately will bring significant improvements at all performance levels.