



The Necessary Shift in Human Consciousness for a World That's Waking Up

By Giles Hutchins & Joe St Clair

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There is much to be deeply concerned about these days. Whether its Islamic State, mass refugee migrations, increasing social tensions, stress and mental illness of epidemic proportions, global water shortages, rapid soil erosion, marine species on the verge of collapse, Artic sea ice at record lows, debit crises the world over, volatile commodity spikes, resource scarcity, climate change and more.

We are living at a time of great global social upheaval, volatility and uncertainty. These transformative times call into question our sense of place and purpose as human beings in an increasingly complex world. Amid these times of systemic breakdown however, there are promising signs of breakthrough. A metamorphosis is in our midst with profound consequences for all of us as leaders, managers, employees and citizens. No one is spared from the enormity of this metamorphosis. The ancient Greeks called such a time *Kairos*, a supreme moment of indeterminable time, which, if not adequately acted upon will pass us by.

There is no time to waste. The challenges we face are enormous but not insurmountable if we take action now. But it's no longer a question of using the same old tools to fix the same old problems. Radically new ideas are needed in order to tackle issues that have become inextricably interwoven and layered. Science will hopefully provide some of the answers we need - but science alone is not enough to get to the heart and roots of these global problems. The solution requires something more. Something far more challenging. It requires a huge shift in the way we think and act as a species. In short, it requires a fundamental change in our consciousness.

'Without a global revolution in the sphere of human consciousness the catastrophe toward which the world is headed will be unavoidable.' Vaclav Havel, Prime Minister, addressing US Congress

In July 2016, The New Paradigm Business and Leadership Summit in Bagni Di Lucca, Italy, brought together a group of world-leading multi-disciplinary scientists and practitioners from the four domains of the natural sciences, consciousness, medicine/health/wellbeing, and business/management to explore the relevance of the mounting scientific evidence pointing to consciousness permeating all of life, and how our ability as human beings to open up and cohere with this ocean of consciousness helps not only improve our wellbeing as individuals but also enhances our ability as organizations and communities to flourish amid the uncertain times we find ourselves in.

A Metamorphosis in our Midst

There is now mounting science-based evidence showing that all life is intimately interconnected, and that humans are participating within this inter-relational field of life, and that certain practices can help us enhance our conscious connection and coherence within this participatory field.

These findings confront 300 years of rationalistic philosophy and materialist science which has examined life through an analytic reductive method to objectify the contents of world, super-imposing an illusion of 'separateness' upon our perception of life.

The mainstay of today's scientific establishment still clings to the reductive perception of life being made up of fragmented and isolated parts that randomly interact in ways that, by-chance alone, happen to allow for consciousness to pop up as a bi-product of complex neurology within our brains.

But this long established and scientifically accepted frame of reference is about to be torn from under our feet and the shock waves will take a long time to settle. We are on the cusp of a radical shift in our philosophic and scientific understanding of life from the old-world notion of 'separateness' to the new-world era of 'interconnectedness'. A new worldview is emerging, and with it comes transformative implications for our sense of place and purpose as human beings within our more-than-human world.

The birthing of this new paradigm spawned in the 20th Century when a number of leading quantum physicists throughout the world started to realise that matter is actually made up of energy – electromagnetic and quantum vibrations. Einstein, Schrodinger, Tesla, Whitehead, Bohm, Plank, Laszlo and many other brilliant minds begun to conceive of the universe as nothing but energetic vibrations held together by an underlying force or informational field. This all-pervasive presence is sometimes referred to as the 'quantum vacuum' or 'zero-point energy field'. Bohm famously referred to it as the 'ground-of-all-being'. All phenomena emerge from - and continuously participate within - this oceanic field of being.

'This world is indeed a living being endowed with a soul and intelligence... a single visible living entity containing all other living entities, which by their nature are related.' Plato, philosopher

The basis of our reality is nothing more, nor nothing less, than a set of vibrational patterns, or dynamic relationships, which create higher order bodies of relationships, or cultures of relationships. Put another way, all matter, all cells, all molecules, all bodies and beings are gestalts of vibration immersed within – differentiated and unique yet never separated from – an all-pervasive field of consciousness.

This is what Whitehead perceived when he explored the universe as an unfolding process of becoming, a process that is grounded within this informational field, where matter and mind, are two-sides of the same coin. Life cannot be separated from mind as all energy is immersed within this background field of consciousness. Metaphorically put, the wave has unique form yet is never separate from the formlessness of the ocean. This underlying field (aka – 'cosmic consciousness' or the 'Akashic field') infuses all forms and all living beings. All forms are manifestations of this field and have both space-time local relationships and also non-local (global) relationships within and across

this local/non-local field. The human body (or 'bodymind' as neurobiologist Candace Pert calls it) is one such gestalt of energetic relationships within this field, exhibiting both local and non-local inter-relationality with the rest of life.

Whilst our brains are complex highly-evolved instruments for receiving, analysing, processing and transmitting consciousness (as are our heart and gut neural networks within an overall 'bodymind'), looking for consciousness inside the brain has famously been referred to as 'looking for the radio announcer inside the radio-set'. This is what the world-leading psychologist and philosopher William James explored some years back in his transmission theory of consciousness, which scientific findings are now validating.

As our scientific studies are becoming more sensitive, there is growing evidence that as we modify the coherence of our neural and sensorial networks within our bodymind, we allow our conscious awareness to attune within this all-pervasive local/non-local consciousness with positive effects for our individual physiological and psychological wellbeing. This new state of awareness has also been proven to enhance our capacity for empathy, our ability to embrace change and act wisely as well as compassionately, while creating the conditions conducive for all of us to enhance our experience of 'coherence'. But crucially this is not just about making us more aware of our inherent capabilities as individuals – it also has profound implications for social change at a global level.

Participatory Worldview

This emerging theory of consciousness and framework of reality posits that we are all co-creative participatory beings interacting within a more-than-human world steeped in intelligence. The whole notion of life's evolution being rooted in random and unrelated interactions is no longer valid. It is Cosmic Intelligence permeates and informs the patterns of relationship within which we participate as conscious co-creators, evolving both locally and globally.

This new paradigm has huge and epic implications for our species and for the future of our planet. It fundamentally transmutes our sense of place and purpose in the world from one of randomness and separateness devoid of meaning, to one of intrinsic meaning and inherent interconnectedness.

'The attempt to live according to the notion that the fragments are really separate is, in essence, what has led to the growing series of extremely urgent crises that is confronting us today. Thus, as is now well known, this way of life has brought about pollution, destruction of the balance of nature, over-population, world-wide economic and political disorder, and the creation of an overall environment that is neither physically nor mentally healthy for most of the people who have to live in it.' David Bohm, physicist

Timeless Wisdom for Today

For millennia, wisdom traditions the world over have long known that to live wise, harmonious lives, we would do well to cultivate coherence within our 'bodyminds' and, in-so-doing, we will create the 'right relationship' with the world around us.

Ten thousand years ago, the ancient Taoists of the Far East realised that cultivating coherence with the all-pervasive Tao was central to living wisely. The Tao in the Far East and the Akasha in the Indus are ancient interpretations of what today's quantum physicists refer to as the 'zero-point energy field', quantum vacuum or dark energy pervading all of life. Out of the Tao emerge the tensions of yin-yang as polarising manifestations from the 'no-thingness' of the Tao's ocean of being. The Taoists learn to attune these yin-yang tensions by cohering with the way of the Tao, finding right relationship through conscious receptivity and responsiveness with coherent intent. This is the wise art of living; an art we would do well to once again learn today whether in our corridors of power, day-to-day working life, university lecture halls, or school classrooms.

Ancient Vedic, Taoist, Shamanic and Tantric practices and rituals are all aimed at cultivating bodymind coherence within ourselves so that we open up to the life-force (the 'chi' or 'prana') flowing throughout life, in-so-doing allowing our intention, attention and relations to subtly shift from dis-ease, separation, competition and domination towards ease, wellbeing, collaboration, compassion and synergy. These energetic practices and mindful meditations (such as T'ai Chi, Yoga or walking mindfully in nature) help us release blockages and stuck energetic traumas and pain that cause incoherence within us, while enhancing our natural receptivity to the deeper wisdom and love innate within this ground-of-all-being permeating our reality. This helps us tend towards coherence, heightened awareness, compassion and wisdom. This is of fundamental importance to the natural sciences, to consciousness research, and to psychology, sociology, organizational development, leadership and business management.

These profound insights are not just airy-fairy or new-age 'feel good' concepts. Quite the contrary. They are insights that have the potential to create the much needed paradigm shift from an ego-centric, hyper-competitive and consumeristic worldview to a more 'holistic' and life-affirming worldview based on connectedness, cooperation and compassion.

Crossing the Threshold

'Science and religion will meet and shake hands...This will be the religion of the future; and if we can work it out, we may be sure that it will be for all times and people.' Swami Vivekananda, guru

For the first time in our history, all the major scientific disciplines throughout the world are on the verge of being radically transformed by this new paradigm.

We can now see from the latest cutting-edge scientific findings that our conscious intention has the ability to change protein behaviour within our bodymind while also having a measurable effect on the coherence of other bodyminds both locally and non-locally. For instance, a person can hold the conscious intent to send healing to someone else regardless of where the other person is located

geographically. If there is an emotional connection between them the other person can experience measurable changes in their cellular water bonding and energetic properties, influencing their coherence, their wellbeing and their immune responses - as well as notable changes in their brain-wave patterns. There is also scientific evidence emerging that once a threshold of more than 10% of the people within an organization or community of people shift their conscious intent, the social field of the whole group shifts, making social transformation quicker, easier, longer lasting and more effective. In other words, it is cheaper and more effective to transform our social systems through compassionate conscious intent than it is through the traditional carrot-and-stick extrinsic factors of conventional organizational development approaches. This has profound implications for today's and tomorrow's leaders seeking to effect rapid and lasting transformation amid these fast-moving times.

Recent scientific studies show us that when we commit to life-affirming compassionate choices with conscious intent, there is a perceptible shift in the quality of our attention, along with greater coherence of our bodymind, which has positive local and non-local effects on others within our organizational and social community.

Our intention as purposeful beings in a purposeful inter-related world therefore, is to improve our ability to flourish as individuals and organizations, so as to benefit all of life. Hence, having a clear sense of purpose at the organizational level that resonates with our authentic sense of self as individuals can create the fertile ground from which flourishing initiatives spawn.

'It's the juncture where organizational purpose and individual calling start to resonate with and reinforce each other that truly extraordinary things happen.' Frederic Laloux, organizational specialist

Yet, despite these promising insights, the business context we face today is still largely inured in the old paradigm way of thinking, operating and organizing. The challenge for our leaders and change agents is to be able to courageously bridge both the old and new paradigm so people feel comfortable enough to take the first tentative steps towards crossing this threshold.

One of the first steps is to accept that the full benefits of embracing the new paradigm of flourishing organizations cannot be quantified through conventional business case methods that apply the 'business-as-usual' short-term profit maximisation logic. Another critical step is to create the space and time amid our busyness to open up and sense the inter-relatedness of life as a felt-sense, an embodied experience, which then informs our 'beingness' and the quality of our relations.

Without doubt there are unknown risks in embarking on this immense voyage of transformation and so high levels of trust, courage and conviction from leaders at all levels is required. Leaders of the new paradigm need to know in their hearts and souls that there is no other realistic or viable alternative than to transform to more compassionate and purposeful business strategies and need to embody vision, courage, conviction and trust to embrace uncertainty amid volatility and even hostility. But staying focused on the 'bigger picture' as well as being buoyed by examples of inspiration and synergistic learning from other organizations also embarking on this journey will help us remain true during these challenging times of simultaneous breakdown and breakthrough.

These are the fundamental keys to success. In order to change the world for the better we first need to change ourselves. And to change ourselves requires acceptance of new norms of behaviour and wisdom based on the underlying principles of interconnectedness, coherence, cooperation, courage and compassion.

Hence, unconventional partnerships will need to be formed, along with systemic innovation and collaboration, while organizational boundaries become more permeable. What has been missing from the old paradigm way of conceiving business is recognising that, in simple terms, we are all in this together. There is nothing inherently wrong with open market competition in itself but there is something fundamentally wrong with believing this is the only economic model worth pursuing. Today's reality is that even our competitors may be useful partners to start sharing our learnings with in a synergistic and mature way.

As more and more scientific findings come to light that prove the intrinsic interconnectedness of our human condition this informs how we operate in business and beyond. We are all in this together. It really is as simple as that, and the sooner we embrace this, the better for one and all.

The New Paradigm Business and Leadership Summit in Italy exemplified the collaborative and multi-disciplinary venture now required in these tumultuous times. The summit itself was hosted by a tripartite relationship of Cass Western University (USA), The Laszlo Institute of New Paradigm Research (Europe) and The Quantum Leadership Centre (China), and incorporated stakeholders from across the globe. During the conference a great variety of leading practitioners from various disciplines openly shared their insights as part of a collaborative exploration. For instance, the Invernizzi Centre for Research, the Global Organizational Learning & Development Network for Sustainability (GOLDEN), the Quantum Leadership Project and AIM2Flourish were just some of the networks seeking collaboration in an open and synergistic way to identify organizations and leaders at the vanguard of future-fit business thinking. This forms part of a continual inquiry by pioneering practitioners of how best to create organizational environments where personal and organizational sense of purpose can resonate so that the 'ontological threshold' from separateness to interconnectedness can be crossed and the learning shared wider to help those taking their first tentative steps on this important journey into the new paradigm of life-affirming business.

[R]evolution of Consciousness

The last few decades have born witness to the general application of a number of developmental psychology models for organizational leadership. For instance: William Torbert's action logic levels of consciousness applied to business leaders; Jean Gebster's Integralism followed by Ken Wilber's Integral Theory and Jenny Wade's application of this for optimizing organizational cultures and structures. There is also Clare Graves, Don Beck and Christopher Cowan's Spiral Dynamics theory applied to levels of consciousness in human cultures, organizations and leadership styles; the well-received recent study by Frederic Laloux on Evolutionary-Teal organizational cultures and structures (drawing on Spiral Dynamics and Integral Theory) and Richard Barrett's seven levels of consciousness for leaders and organizations.

All these developmental models detail progressive stages of consciousness – whereupon our daily awareness deepens, enriching how we relate and engage with ourselves and others in our organizations. The originators and practitioners of these models are keen to point out that as individuals and groups of people (teams, organizations and wider networks of stakeholders) we ‘transcend and include’ these levels of consciousness as we progress, i.e. as we advance in conscious awareness we contain within us the awareness of the lower levels while enriching our perceptual horizon with a deepening consciousness that transforms how we view our selves and the world around us.

All these developmental models point to a threshold being crossed at a certain level, where a major shift from ego-orientated consciousness transcends into a state where our ‘ego-awareness’ and ‘soul-awareness’ permeate more readily, infusing into a more integrated, inclusive and holistic awareness. In Maslow’s hierarchy this threshold is crossed from the level of self-esteem into the level of self-actualization and self-transcendence. For Spiral Dynamics and Wilber’s Integral Theory this is from Tier One consciousness to Tier Two consciousness, characterised by a shift from an essentially ego-orientated awareness rooted in fear-based separateness, towards an essentially soul-orientated love-based connectedness. This is a fundamental transfiguration of our sense of place and purpose in the world. As we become conscious of the inter-relational nature of our human systems and more-than-human world, our embodiment of our world shifts in to a more compassionate, soul-infused, ecological way of attending.

This all sounds good on paper, but where the rubber really hits the road is in our day-to-day interactions and relationships within what are often stressful working environments with numerous meeting conventions and management protocols that seem to strangle this compassionate, ecological connectedness at source. Pioneering academic research, scientific discoveries and field practitioner case studies provide vital support in helping our leaders and change agents navigate this big leap from our prevalent organizational mind-set to Tier 2 operating. Through practical techniques, examples and evidenced-based research we equip ourselves to start cultivating individual and collective coherence through daily practices, interventions and liberating structures.

There are a multitude of organizations of all shapes and sizes embarking on this journey towards the new paradigm. Examples include: Thornton’s Budgen, a supermarket in London that uses ‘Way of Council’ and deep listening exercises regularly with its staff, gaining dramatic improvements in morale, innovation, collaboration and customer satisfaction as a result; FAVI, a French manufacturer, which has ‘check-ins’ at the beginning of all its meetings so people can share stories of thanks and gratitude; Zappos, the American on-line retailer, which makes time every Friday for people to share stories of how they have helped each other as well as their suppliers and customers thus helping the organization become more responsive and adaptive amid rapidly changing market conditions, as staff become more collaborative and empowered. Other innovative companies include IACP, a legal consortium in Canada that successfully embraces the ‘children’s fire’ as part of its decision-making - where it considers the impact each strategic decision has on the livelihood of the next generation and has now brought it into their collaboration dispute resolution process with clients. Sounds True, the multi-media company, has a minutes’ silence at the beginning of every meeting, and after a few weeks of bringing in this simple change, the benefits are being felt by everyone, not just the staff but all the stakeholders who interact with the company too. Then there is the global manufacturer, “Gore & Associates” which was recently named one of Europe’s top employers and continues to

outperform its peers due to its non-hierarchic self-organizing culture celebrating diversity, creativity, empowerment and transparent communications.

These initiatives are all causes for celebration and provide real world examples of how innovative and visionary organisations are actually making a difference. But is this enough to presage meaningful and sustainable global change? In short, are such heart-warming stories enough to convince us that we are becoming a more enlightened species and are business leaders ready to find the courage to really make positive change?

Take for example one of the most encouraging and positive steps that has recently been taken to tackle the world's most pressing problems. In 2014, the UN General Assembly's Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) forwarded a proposal containing 17 goals with 169 targets covering a broad range of sustainable development issues including ending poverty and hunger, improving health and education, making cities more sustainable, combating climate change, and protecting oceans and forests. Signed by 193 countries the adoption of these SDG's is undoubtedly a huge step forward and a welcome sign of global convergence designed to tackle major global issues. At face value this is extremely good news. But when we dig a little deeper and examine the strategies being proposed to solve these issues we find that there is a fundamental flaw based on old-paradigm thinking. The 'experts' tasked to find solutions to problems like pollution or poverty are still planning to tackle the complexities of the problem by applying yesterday's logic.

Solving major world crises with old paradigm thinking is like taking a headache tablet to ease chronic stress. It might go some way to easing the immediate pain but it is not healing the root cause. It is the same thing with the SDG's. If we are really serious about solving our systemic challenges we need to go to the root cause of the problem. And the problem, put simply, is our misconception about the nature of reality, and what flows from this is our flawed relationship with life. It is this that causes our problems.

The revolution of science and spirituality now upon us is helping us wake up to the fundamental truth that we are not isolated islands of matter that we call a 'human body' with a physical brain containing something we call 'consciousness'. Rather, we are soulful beings inter-relating in a soul-filled world, where everything is intimately connected to everything else. Once we see this, and learn to embrace this reality, then we will begin to acquire the universal wisdom now needed to heal our troubled world. This is the wisdom our business leaders need to embrace the world over. It is the wisdom that provides the key catalyst for our meaningful organizational change.

'Learn how to see. Realize everything connects to everything else.' Leonardo Da Vinci, genius

The Great Turning

To summarise, we are in the midst of a metamorphosis. Whether it's the disciplines of quantum physics, neuroscience, psychology, ecology, organizational development or leadership, it is now dawning on our contemporary consciousness that life is not simply a random mechanistic construct of push-pull factors and selfish genes where separate organisms compete with each other in the struggle for survival. Rather, we are now recognising that life is an inter-relational network immersed within a ground-of-all-being. All of life, from the macro to the micro, consists of energetic relations co-creating within this orchestra of life. Everything is in dynamic relation with everything else, continuously communicating and collaborating within an immense ocean of consciousness.

The message is very clear. We cannot continue to run politics and business in the old paradigm ways anymore. The profound shift in our recent understanding of reality is helping to deepen our sense of place and purpose in the world, and helping provide the insight, inspiration and courage leaders and change agents need to cross the ontological threshold from fear-based ego-led control-based separateness into love-based soul-led flourishing firms of the future.

The number one most important thing facing our leaders, managers and change agents today is this shift in consciousness, and every one of us needs the help of those around us as we wake up to our deeper humanity.

'The greatest voyage of our lifetimes is not in the seeking of new landscapes, but in the seeing with new eyes.' Marcel Proust, philosopher

About The Authors

Giles Hutchins

Thought leader, writer and adviser Giles Hutchins blends a wealth of business strategy, operations and transformation experience with pioneering new thought on leading, sustaining and flourishing in volatile times. In particular, he draws on the logic of living systems to aid our organizations evolve into 'firms of the future'.

A prolific speaker, writer and adviser, he applies twenty years of experience to his work at personal and organizational levels. Recently the Global Sustainability Director for Atos, and previously a management consultant with KPMG, he has helped transform a wide range of organizations (corporate, third sector, public sector and start-up). Giles is co-founder of BCI: Biomimicry for Creative Innovation, Founding Partner of The Bio-Leadership Project and Chair of The Future Fit Leadership Academy. He regularly guest lectures at leading Universities and Business Schools, and speaks at conferences and expert roundtables. He has been interviewed by the BBC and writes articles for a number of world leading networks. Giles is author of the books *The Nature of Business* (2012), *The Illusion of Separation* (2014) and *Future Fit* (2016).

Joe St Clair

After a successful career as a Senior Executive with Nationwide Building Society, Joe moved into International Management Consultancy and has worked all over the world in the boardrooms of some of the world's leading Companies solving corporate problems. His clients include Vodafone, M&S, DHL, Nat West, Prudential, EE, Thomas Cook, Morgan Stanley and many others.

In addition to his corporate work Joe is an established professional Writer with over 3000 articles published to date in leading magazines as well as a number of books. He is also a qualified Life Coach, Hypnotherapist and Reiki Energy Healer with a deep lifelong interest in Spirituality, Consciousness and Meditation.

Joe works closely with eminent philosopher, scientist and writer Ervin Laszlo and is currently the Managing Director of the Laszlo Institute of New Paradigm Research (L-INPR) in Tuscany, Italy - as well as Consultant to The Club of Budapest International – an organisation founded by Ervin Laszlo and now spread across 22 countries campaigning for a more peaceful, equitable and sustainable world. He is also Managing Director of Aurum Vita Limited a UK based Company that markets a number of new ground-breaking products to improve health and vitality.

Joe is the author of the best-selling book *100 Tips for Total Life Fulfilment* with two more books about to be published – one on his own spiritual journey called *The Path to Indra* and another about the true story behind the Uganda-Tanzania war and downfall of Idi Amin in 1978-1980. He is currently working on a new book called *EarthPulse* aimed at analysing and solving the world's most critical problems including climate change, pollution, poverty, corporate corruption, deforestation and human rights.

Joe is also a member of a new committee at the House of Lords in Westminster to further peace discussions relating to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and ideas for resolution. Joe has also recently been appointed President of 'Eternea' – the organisation co-founded by John Audette and Eben Alexander, the New York bestselling author of *Proof of Heaven*.

