LEADERSHIP TRANSFORMATION:

WHAT DOES IT TAKE FOR A TRADITIONAL MANAGER TO TRANSFORM INTO A CONTEMPORARY LEADER?

Peter Andrew Fuda

Bachelor of Arts - Honours First Class (History), Master of Commerce (Marketing and Management)

Macquarie University

Macquarie Graduate School of Management (MGSM)

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ABSTRACT

My research question is *what does it take for a traditional manager to transform into a contemporary leader?* It was born from frustration with the extant leadership literature of the positivist tradition and an opportunity to draw on privileged access to seven CEOs who had demonstrated positive shifts in both their leadership effectiveness and organisational performance, supported by additional quantitative third party evidence of their 'leadership transformation'. Invoking the work of key social constructionist authors, I have used a narrative approach to explore how the CEOs interpreted the nature and causes of their transformation 'success'. Drawing on in-depth interviews with the seven CEOs, and collaboration with a broader 'community of research', I developed seven reflective narratives to provide insight into the character and context of each CEO's journey. The narratives are then interpreted by way of seven metaphors designed to be used in a 'generative' fashion to stimulate further insights into leadership transformation. The contribution of this study to management practitioners, my primary audience, is to inspire reflection and action. This contribution has already begun through speaking engagements that have been completed by me and the CEOs in this study to several thousand members of my management practitioner audience.

STATEMENT OF CANDIDATE

I certify that the work in this thesis entitled *Leadership Transformation: What does it take for a traditional manager to transform into a contemporary leader?* has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree to any other university or institution other than Macquarie University.

I also certify that the thesis is an original piece of research and it has been written by me. Any help and assistance that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself have been appropriately acknowledged.

In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

The research presented in this thesis was approved by Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee, reference number: HE25MAY2007-D05213 on 22nd June 2007.

P. Fuda

Peter Andrew Fuda (Student I.D. 31731228)

8th September 2010

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

If I have seen further than others, it is by standing upon the shoulders of giants (Isaac Newton).

I would like to acknowledge the many 'giants' who have made this doctorate possible, and I do so in the strong belief that it simply would never have happened without them. This doctorate is not the story of a single, committed individual; it is the story of a powerful community of knowledge and support.

I started my doctorate on December 16, 2005. I can be very precise about this date because it was the same day my daughter Isabella was born – probably the best excuse ever to leave early on the very first day of class. She has continued to remind me of what is most important in life every day since. My wife Kara has contributed in many direct and indirect ways, including helping me to get through Quantitative Research Methods with the credit I needed to progress to this thesis. She has provided emotional support and has done the lion's share of parenting Isabella – particularly in year one and five when the demands of my study became particularly onerous. Thank you for your support and encouragement – I love you.

My mum, dad, brother and sister have also provided me with encouragement and support over the years of this thesis. In particular, I'd like to thank my mum for instilling in me the values of self-reliance, accountability and resilience; they were gifts that kept on giving throughout this research process.

Professor Richard Badham has been the best supervisor, mentor and friend that I could have hoped for during this process. I am very grateful for your commitment, wisdom and criticism over the past four years. I have no doubt that this thesis is infinitely better because of your guidance – thank you.

I am particularly grateful to the stars of this study; the CEOs – Alan McGilvray, Mike Shove, Jim Varghese, Clynton Bartholomeusz, Tim Castree, Paul Timmins and Dennis Fox. Your commitment, humility and authenticity, within the scope of this study and beyond, continue to be a source of inspiration to me. I am prohibited by ethics guidelines from naming the colleagues of the CEOs who contributed to this study. Thank you for your time and frankness – you know who you are.

Thank you to Quentin Jones of Human Synergistics, James O'Toole and Chris Cheatley of the CEO Forum, John Karagounis of the CEO Circle, and Ray Weekes of the CEO Institute. The platforms that you each provided to me and the CEOs in this study over the past 12 months forced us to get clear on our stories and insights well in advance of this thesis. It was a great discipline that I believe has improved our research.

Thank you to my second family - the team at The Alignment Partnership (TAP); Johanna Jordan, Ian Moore, Graham Dunn, Ron Schwartz, Leanne Myers, Angie Virtue and Martin Lombard. Your direct contributions to this study, as well as your friendship and support, have been of immense benefit to me. I also appreciate you keeping our business healthy and growing when my attention has been divided. Thanks also to my old colleague and friend Mel Cowan.

I have left Skye Phillips until last because her contribution to this study has been simply immense. From the very start, you have played the roles of assistant, partner, confidant, supervisor, and pain in the backside – often all on the same day. Your commitment, insight and intellect have improved this thesis immeasurably and for that I am eternally grateful.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. WHAT IS A DBA?

> There are few established and uncontested principles, beyond administrative regulations, as to what constitutes a 'good' Ph.D - let alone its bastard offspring – the DBA. (Richard Badham, August 2010).

I am fortunate to have the Macquarie Graduate School of Management's Associate Dean of Research as my supervising professor for this doctoral thesis, and the quote above is taken from a recent conversation about the focus and contribution of my work. This thesis is for a *Doctorate in Business Administration (DBA)*. As such it is intended, and required, to be a genuine contribution to professional knowledge. But what does this mean? In this thesis I have followed the potentially risky yet, in my opinion, most valuable path of attempting to genuinely contribute to professional knowledge. I do so in a number of ways that do not conform with the traditional approach to Ph.D theses.

To conform to traditional academic canon - an 'introduction', 'literature review', 'methodology', 'empirical study', and 'findings' tailored to an academic audience - is likely to appeal to the intellectual prejudices of many reviewers, yet may easily do so at the expense of relevance to the practitioner. Of course, an easy solution is to produce a Ph.D-like thesis that *also* contributes to professional practice. Such a magnificent achievement is far from impossible, and the work of management writers such as Peter Drucker, Donald Schon, Chris Argyris, Edgar Schein, and Peter Senge are witness to this possibility. For those of us who have not attained this status, however, there are important choices to be made. There is a danger that low-risk academic conformity may occur at the expense of high-risk professional relevance. As a result, I have chosen to tailor the topic, method and style of this thesis specifically for my intended audience(s).

1.2. WHO IS MY AUDIENCE?

> Book learning is necessary but not sufficient. If we want to become wise then we must get out of the library and walk the talk. Unfortunately, modern universities have forgotten this advice (Steve Schwartz, August 2010).

My audience for this DBA is first and foremost the management practitioner. By this I mean CEOs or senior executives, internal change agents such as Human Resources professionals, and external change agents; namely, consultants such as myself. In addition to the management practitioner, my second audience is an academic one; those who will judge the scholastic merits and contribution of this study.

While these two audiences may seem to have opposing needs, I feel uniquely placed to act as somewhat of a translator between these two worlds. My consulting clients are generally quite suspicious of theoretical approaches to management, however they desire leading edge change practices. As a result, my intent for this thesis is to bring a more rigorous form of practice to the corporate world. At the same time, certain academics are calling for more pragmatic forms of research. As recent as August 25th 2010, the Vice Chancellor of my own university, Steve Schwartz, titled his Macquarie University Annual Lecture *In pursuit of practical wisdom*. The quote above is taken from that lecture and it is my intention that this thesis answers this academic call as well.

1.3. WHAT IS MY RESEARCH QUESTION?

> Decades of academic analysis have given us more than 350 definitions of leadership. Literally thousands of empirical investigations of leaders have been conducted in the last 75 years alone, but no clear and unequivocal understanding exists as to what distinguishes leaders from non-leaders and... what distinguishes effective leaders from ineffective leaders (Bennis & Nanus, 1985:4).

My research question is *what does it take for a traditional manager to transform into a contemporary leader?* This question was born from a variety of forces that I explain in detail in *Chapter 2.1. Emergence of a Research Question,* but in particular from my frustration with the extant leadership literature. Bennis and Nanus in their quote above refer to the divergence and confusion in the ever expanding field of 'leadership' study. Personally, in my reading of both academic and practitioner oriented texts, I was frustrated with the long lists of qualities and attributes that defined 'effective' leadership, and the heroic persona that was often ascribed to the person sitting atop the organisation structure. As can be read in *Appendix D - The Peter Fuda Story*, in ten years of interaction with senior executives I had not met this 'heroic' individual, just a lot of well intentioned human beings doing the best they could under ever increasing pressures.

My particular area of interest was to understand how several of the leaders (CEOs or equivalent status) I had worked with in my consulting practice had shifted their leadership effectiveness over time, in the perception of their colleagues. The shift in these leaders was not just anecdotal; I had quantitative data on this shift using a 360 degree survey instrument called Leadership/Impact® (Cooke, 1997)[1]. This tool was developed by Dr Rob Cooke, Associate Professor Emeritus of Managerial Studies at the University of Illinois, and Managing Director of Human Synergistics International.

The Leadership/Impact tool has played an important role in my research process; it enabled me to operationalise my research question, as I explain in depth in *Chapter 2.3. Reconceptualising the Research Question....* It was also one of several means by which I selected a sample of seven CEOs to form the centrepiece of this study. Finally, it is interspersed throughout the entire thesis as the lens through which the CEOs understood their 'transformations'. As the Leadership/Impact tool is so prominently featured in this thesis, I will now take the reader through a detailed explanation of this instrument.

1.4. WHAT IS THE LEADERSHIP/IMPACT TOOL?

> Managers cannot be considered to "lead" (i.e. to guide or direct) unless they in some way transform, shape, or influence the ways in which they approach their work and interact with one another. The effectiveness of a leader, therefore, depends on the magnitude and direction of – as well as the strategies used to achieve – this impact (Cooke, 2009:16).

In many of my company's client engagements, we undertake interventions designed to increase leadership effectiveness. As part of undertaking this work, I have found it extremely valuable to use Human Synergistics' Leadership/Impact tool. As in Rob Cooke's quote above, the Leadership/Impact tool is premised on the philosophy that leaders' effectiveness is best understood through their impact; in

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[1] The Leadership/Impact™ is a registered trademark of Human Synergistics International – copyright 2005 Human Synergistics International. Research and development by Robert A. Cooke, Ph.D and J. Clayton Lafferty, PhD.

particular, how they motivate and encourage others to behave. I believe in this philosophy and argue strongly for this approach to leadership in this thesis.

Leadership/Impact is considered a highly valid and reliable instrument for measuring a leader's effectiveness that is grounded in a comprehensive review of applied psychology theory (Szumal, 2000, 2002), and a detailed explanation of the theories underpinning this tool is available in *Appendix A - Human Synergistics Theory and Methodology.*

The Leadership/Impact tool is a 360 degree survey instrument. The leader undergoing assessment completes a survey on his or her *ideal* impact, while a selection of up to eight others which may comprise subordinates, peers, and a higher level manager complete a confidential survey on the leader's *actual* impact. The results are then calculated by Human Synergistics who plot the results onto a circular graph called a Circumplex. The Circumplex for Leadership/Impact can be seen in Figure 1 below.
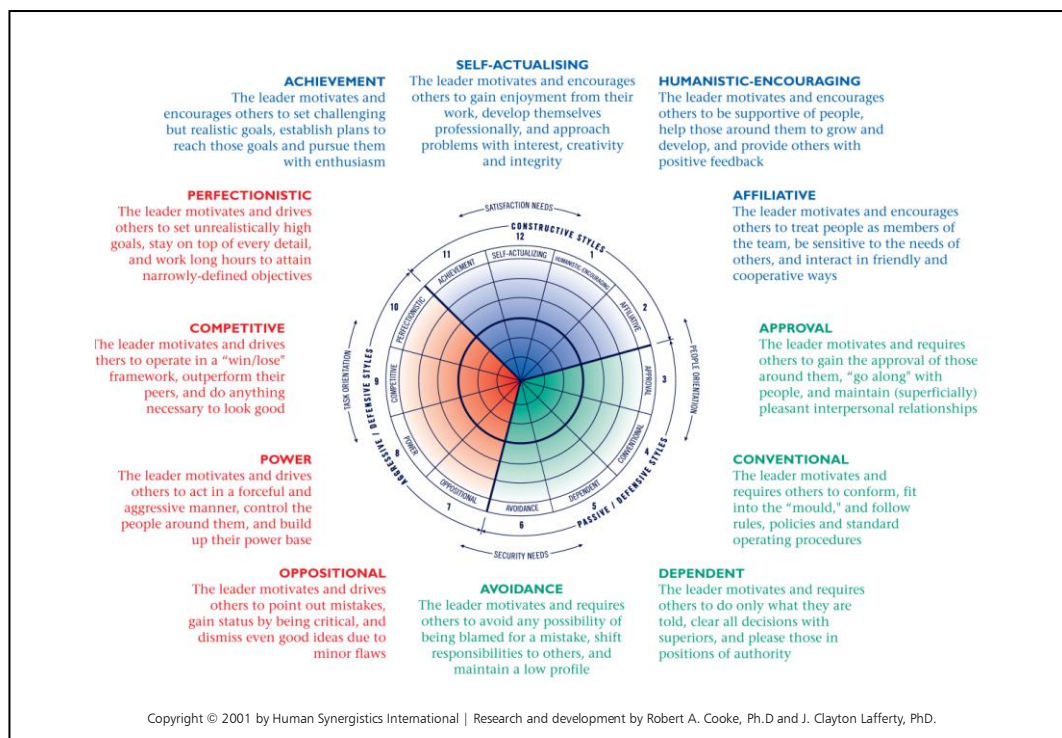
Figure 1: The Human Synergistics Circumplex for Leadership/Impact

The Circumplex presents 12 styles grouped into three coloured 'clusters'; blue, green and red. I invite the reader who is not familiar with the language of the tool to orient themselves with the definitions of the 12 styles as they appear above, since commonly used words like 'Achievement' and 'Competitive' may be interpreted in a number of ways that the tool does not measure.[2]

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[2] I use a capital letters throughout the thesis to denote any language referring directly to the Leadership/Impact Circumplex (e.g. Constructive, Achievement, etc). I do this to ensure the reader can distinguish between common place words and when I am speaking specifically about the Leadership/Impact tool.

The four Constructive styles are denoted by the colour blue and are named 'Achievement', 'Self-Actualizing', 'Humanistic-Encouraging', and 'Affiliative'. The definitions for these styles are summarised above in Figure 1 so I will not repeat these definitions here. In general terms, leaders with a blue impact motivate and encourage others to pursue higher order 'satisfaction' based needs as opposed to more 'security' conscious behaviour. They also encourage a balance between task completion and being considerate of the needs of people.

The four Passive-Defensive styles are denoted by the colour green and are named 'Approval', 'Conventional', 'Dependant' and 'Avoidance'. In general terms, leaders with a green impact motivate and encourage others to protect themselves rather than pursue higher order 'satisfaction' based needs. They also encourage others to focus on the needs of people at the expense of task completion.

The four Aggressive-Defensive styles are denoted by the colour red and are named 'Oppositional', 'Power', 'Competitive' and 'Perfectionistic'. Like leaders with a green impact, those leaders with a red impact motivate and encourage others to protect themselves rather than pursue higher order 'satisfaction' based needs. The key difference with a red impact is that these leaders encourage others to focus on task completion at the expense of the needs of people.

There are several reasons why I like this tool above and beyond its validity and reliability. Firstly, it is focused on the leader's impact on others; as opposed to describing and judging one's own behaviour or personality. As a result, I have found that defensive reactions to challenging feedback are not as frequent or intense as some other survey tools. Secondly, it employs a lexicon that is familiar to senior leaders; 'effectiveness', 'impact' and 'strategies'. Thirdly, leaders receive data on how they are using ten leadership 'strategies' to create their *actual* impact. If leaders desire to shift their impact, they can identify strategies that will be helpful in this pursuit.

Perhaps most importantly, the Leadership/Impact tool relies on a participant set vision or *ideal* impact, not an 'expert' established benchmark. A Constructive Leadership/Impact is the one most desired by leaders, as is reflected by the average *ideal* impact for Australia and New Zealand (ANZ) in Figure 2 below. Consequently, I generally do not have to preach to leaders about the benefits of a Constructive impact, they will almost always tell me through their *ideal* impact that this is what they want.

As can be seen from the average *actual* impact data, leaders' 'espoused theories' are generally quite different to their 'theories in use'; a notion that forms the central thesis of Argyris and Schon's (1974) *Theory in practice: Increasing professional effectiveness*. When this gap appears in 'hard data' via the Circumplex, my job as a change agent revolves around supporting the leader and holding him or her accountable for meeting their own ideals, rather than imposing my viewpoint or theoretical expertise.

ANZ Average Ideal Impact
2009
L/I Ideal Impact (n=5073)

ANZ Average Actual Impact
2009
L/I Actual Impact (n=36738)
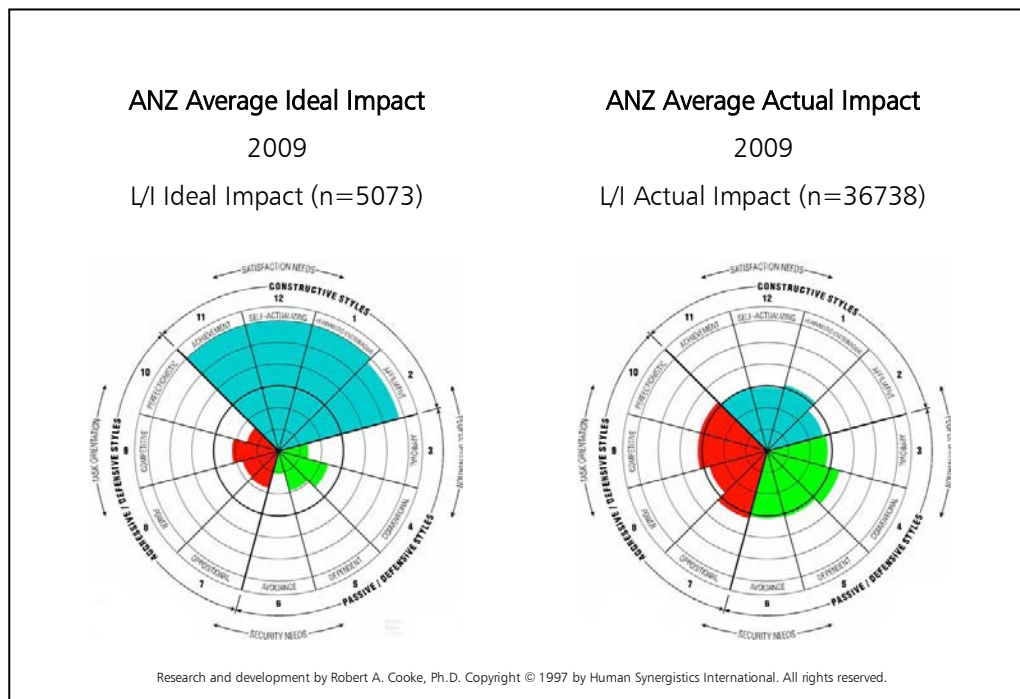
Figure 2: Average ANZ Ideal Impact data Vs Average ANZ Actual impact data 2009

1.5. HOW HAVE I OPERATIONALISED MY RESEARCH QUESTION?

> ...my team and I started to get a common language; it [Leadership/Impact] just gave us a way to talk about it. And even to this day - more than two years after I've been introduced to the tool, me and those around me I've been working with, we still use that language on a day-to-day basis (Tim Castree, CEO in this study).

I explore the operationalisation of my research question in detail in *Chapter 2.3. Reconceptualising the Research Question...,* including the epistemological assumptions that underpin my approach. There are several criteria that I use to define 'transformation', not the least of which is the Leadership/Impact tool. Through the lens of this tool, I liken 'traditional manager' to a one who predominantly motivates a red or green impact, and I liken 'contemporary leader' to a one who predominantly motivates a blue impact. 'Transformation' occurs when a leader's impact shifts from predominantly red or green, to predominantly blue over two points in time, in the perception of others. The reader can see the specific data shifts for each of the seven CEOs in this study in *Appendix B – CEO Leadership/Impact Data*. To show the magnitude of this shift, I have included the 'aggregate' first and last measures for the seven CEOs in this study, in Figure 3 below.

This framework was used to help operationalise the research question because I had ready access to it from my consulting engagements with the seven CEOs in the study. As one of the CEOs in the study, Tim Castree, says in the quote above, the Circumplex was also the lens through which the CEOs in this study experienced their 'transformations'. The data set was also attractive because it provided a quantitative foundation for my qualitative study. Perhaps more importantly, it was less controversial than developing

the 351st definition of leadership effectiveness, or adhering to one aspect of a chaotic debate. I say this because the *ideal* of Constructive Leadership/Impact can be seen as a dominant cultural heuristic, as
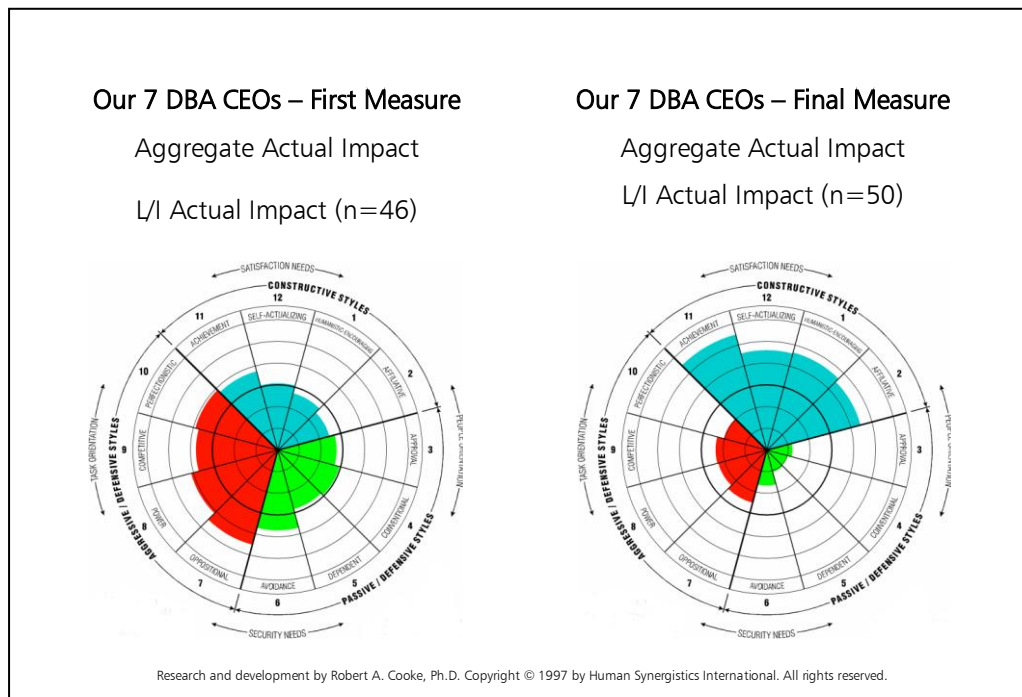
Figure 3: Aggregate Impact Data for our 7 DBA CEOs – First Measure Vs Final Measure

judged by the thousands of executives from Australia and New Zealand who have contributed to the average data set, shown back in Figure 2.

Importantly, my definition of transformation in the seven CEOs in this study is informed by, but not limited to their Leadership/Impact data. There were several other criteria that defined the sample for this study including evidence of transformation in the respective leader's executive team, and evidence of positive shifts across a broad range of organisational performance metrics. This case for each CEO's inclusion in this study can be read in *Chapter 3.1 – Subject Selection Justification*.

1.6. HOW AM I GOING TO ANSWER MY RESEARCH QUESTION?

> If accuracy is nice but not necessary in sense making, then what is necessary?...something that preserves plausibility and coherence, something that is reasonable and memorable...something that resonates with other people, something that can be constructed retrospectively but can also be used prospectively, something that allows for embellishment to fit current oddities, something that is fun to contrast. In short, what is necessary in sense making is a good story (Weick, 1995:60-61).

I have taken an approach to answering my research question that those in the positivist tradition might call 'unconventional', to say the least. This study adopts a social constructionist lens to understand leadership transformation through narrative, which I will discuss here, and metaphor, which I discuss below in answer to the question *'What are my findings?'*

In *Chapter 2.2. 3 conversations…,* I document how I came to the conclusion that a narrative methodology best allows me to examine and present the unique contexts and complexities inherent in each CEOs leadership experience, including a seminal conversation with 'leadership guru' Manfred Kets de Vries. As a result, this thesis pivots around seven CEO narratives that aim to capture how each CEO 'lived' the phenomenon of leadership transformation.

To support my approach, I draw upon the works of a community of prominent social constructionist authors including Keith Grint (2000, 2005), Barbara Czarniawska (1997, 1998, 2004), and Karl Weick (1979, 1995, 2001). As per Weick's quote above, social constructionists take issue with the positivist critique that narrative is unproductive for research and practice. Through the works of Weick and others, in *Chapter 2.4. A Narrative Methodology* I present a strong case for the opposite. In particular, that narrative is a powerful device for sense making and purposeful action. It supports our exploration of the nature of leadership transformation, the factors that are seen as responsible for its occurrence, and the 'double hermeneutic' (Giddens, 1987) that occurs between academics and practitioners, scientific and lay audiences, as they reflect on this phenomenon.

As this thesis moved away from a positivist approach, we made the decision not to have a traditional literature review of leadership theory. I say 'we' because this idea began as Richard Badham's provocation. There were several reasons pushing us down this path. First and foremost, the social constructionist authors that have heavily informed this study argue that the existing leadership literature, which falls largely within the positivist tradition, obscures rather than illuminates our understanding of leadership (Grint, 2000; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 1996; Pye, 2005). This is not to say that my study lacks theoretical underpinnings; far from it. In *Chapter 2.3. Reconceptualising the Research Question…,* I draw upon several academic 'giants' to make the epistemological assumptions of my argument explicit.

Theory has also guided this study in the sense that I have been influenced by it in my work and study over the past twelve years, and I was the 'lens' through which the CEOs experiences were interpreted for this thesis. In *Appendix D – The Peter Fuda Story*, I am explicit about the literature that has most influenced my philosophies in the lead up to this doctoral thesis. My story also exposes the values, beliefs and life experiences that may have influenced my interactions with the CEOs over the years.

There is an additional practical reason why a literature review is not desirable for my study. In my experience as both a management consultant, and as a DBA student who has now spoken about elements of this study with several thousand management practitioners in the past 12 months, my primary audience has been far more interested in the CEO stories and my insights on those stories, than any theoretical conversation. I also feel this position is consistent with the DBA's focus on learnings to advance management practice.

Very early on, Richard and I did discuss the idea of having no formal methodology chapter either but, rather, another narrative from myself, the human 'microscope', as a contribution to deepen the readers' understanding of the nature and origins of the CEO narratives that were being presented. In the course of

the research process, it became apparent, however, that the whole idea of narrative enquiry was too complex and topical for such a simple solution. As a consequence, the methodological reflections grew in importance, and length. The excitement of writing compelling stories for my doctoral thesis gradually gave way to different emotions as I was confronted by many theoretical considerations; from how I gathered my data to how I crafted the narratives. In *Chapter 2.4. A Narrative Methodology,* I provide the reader with a pictorial overview of my specific processes for gathering data, and interpreting the emerging themes. This overview is supplemented by a very detailed appendix if the reader requires further information; *Appendix C – Methodology Supplement*. In *Chapter 2.5. Crafting the Narratives,* I share with reader in some detail, how I went about assembling the narratives, distinguish the many 'voices' that contributed to the narratives, and the merits upon which they may be judged.

Upon reading the methodology, it will become apparent to the reader that there is an additional element of my approach that, while often acknowledged by others, is not given the same centrality and significance; this is the 'community of learning' that has been at play for the duration of this study. This community emerged out of three forces. Firstly, my learning style is very collaborative so I naturally engaged others in my processes of reflection and sense making. Secondly, I am fortunate in my everyday work to be surrounded by many practitioners who share my passion for leadership transformation. These practitioners included my colleagues in my consulting company, my clients, and the attendees of the various CEO and change agent forums that I have spoken at over the past 12 months.

In addition to the community described above, I had a research assistant for the duration of this study, Skye Phillips, in an effort to mitigate my natural bias resulting from my close proximity to each CEO's journey. I consider her involvement a key strength of my research. Skye drove the analytics software program *Leximancer* to draw out themes from the interview data, and was a co-developer of the methodology and metaphors chapters. She was also my conscience whenever my 'judgement' overtook my 'perception' in my writing of the CEO narratives.

In *Chapter 2.4. A Narrative Methodology*, I invoke Polish sociologist's Zygmunt Bauman's (1992) notion of the *hermeneutic spiral,* to describe the multiple loops of interpretation that took me and my community of learning to a higher level of insight through this research process, far from where we had begun.

1.7. WHAT ARE MY FINDINGS?

> The reader is left with everything to do, yet everything has already been done; the work only exists precisely on the level of ...[the reader's] abilities; while he reads and creates, he knows that he could always create more profoundly; and this is why the work appears to him as inexhaustible and as impenetrable as an object (Sartre, 1949:167).

There is no claim in this thesis to be providing 'objective' knowledge; as a result, I do not have a neat, positivist statement, as either hypothesis or outcome, about *'what does it take for a traditional manager to transform into a contemporary leader?'* Having spent a large portion of my thesis justifying my social constructionist stance, such a statement is neither possible nor desirable. What I have done is provide

seven CEO narratives, and seven metaphors for leadership transformation, which allow readers to make sense of the research question, in a way that will inevitably resonate with their own narratives. This notion of the reader placing his or her own meaning on a text, often referred to as 'reader response-theory' (Iser, 1974), is the key tenet of Jean Paul Sartre's quote above, and the way I hope my work will be judged. A more detailed discussion of reader response theory is presented in *Chapter 2.5. Crafting the Narratives.*

Prior to submitting this thesis, I have already collected responses from various forums where I have presented my work to some of the community described above, in order to test the resonance of my work with my target audience; the management practitioner. The reader can view these responses in *Appendix E – Resonance with Management Practitioners*. The reader can also see how each CEO responded to my telling of his story at the end of each narrative. That said, I will now outline briefly what I believe to be the value of the narratives and metaphors.

In the first instance, the narratives are valuable because unlike some studies of leadership where anonymity may be important, the seven CEOs in this study are named, and further information and inquiry is therefore possible. They have a clear identity in each of the narratives, some of their physical attributes are described, and photos of each CEO are included. In fact, the reader can view four of these CEOs presenting elements of their stories live on stage at the 11th Australian Conference on Leadership and Culture. This DVD is physically included (as a disc) in *Appendix F – DVD of CEO Presentations*.

The narratives have a degree of intimacy that is valuable. Notwithstanding the disadvantages of my roles as both consultant and researcher, the intimacy of my relationship with each of the CEOs has afforded this study many benefits. I was 'there' for much of each CEO's journey so my insights supplement the reflections of the CEOs. The CEOs trusted me to such a degree that they gave me a 'warts and all' view of their experiences, allowed me to take them back in time to reflect on their darkest moments, and have then permitted me to publish all of this as part of a doctoral thesis.

The narratives are designed to stand as 'findings' in their own right, and as I have already mentioned earlier, my intention is that they encourage reflection and inspire action. The intelligence, openness and achievements of each CEO, the richness of the stories told by themselves and their close compatriots, the number of spirals that have taken place in our own 'hermeneutic spiral', the reception of multiple audiences to date – all of these support the claim that they are likely to be useful as reflective narratives. And, finally, while the narratives form the major contribution of this thesis, there is one additional piece of value that they provided. The seven narratives collectively allowed me to speculate about the core themes, or 'grand narrative' of leadership transformation.

In *Chapter 4. Seven Metaphors for Leadership Transformation*, I draw upon seven metaphors to make sense of, tie together, and interpret central themes that emerged from the narratives during the research process. This decision to extract, and develop upon, emergent metaphors rather than document scientific findings is an approach that fits within a broader tradition of works that ascribe metaphors with an important role in making sense of, shaping, and constructing organisational 'reality', particularly in

situations of plurality and complexity (Lackoff & Johnson, 1980; Schon, 1963; Morgan, 1986, 1987; Tsoukas, 1993; Weick, 1979).

The seven metaphors that I have chosen are *Fire, Snowball, Master Chef, Coach, Mask, Movie* and *Russian Dolls*. Within each metaphor, I have chosen a limited number of applications that speak to my own readings of the narratives. However, I believe the true value of the metaphors for the management partitioner extends even further. This value lies in their overall 'generative' potential (Schon, 1963, 1979); that is, when they are designed to open not close thinking, to inspire not restrict creativity, and to invite alternative meanings and applications. It is in this spirit that the metaphors have been developed in this thesis.

I have already gotten a sense for the potential of these seven metaphors from my many speaking engagements and interactions with 'informed practitioners' over the past 12 months. To my great enjoyment, the question and answer periods would often entail audience members taking one of the metaphors in a direction that I had not conceived of at all.

1.8. HOW MIGHT YOU READ THIS THESIS?

The complexity of this research study, and its potentially controversial nature for some readers, means that there is a degree of elaboration and repetition as the thesis attempts to argue for and develop upon its approach from a number of different angles. It is my hope that you will feel free to speed through those sections, particularly in the methodology, where you are already knowledgeable, or convinced of the validity of the accounts being offered, and concentrate on the main output of the thesis; the narratives and metaphors.

In addition, the very nature of narratives means that this thesis is longer than if I was doing a more traditional study; particularly since I have seven in the main thesis document. While a strict and disciplined approach has been adopted in the refinement and focusing of each narrative, the nature of narrative representation means that they remain somewhat lengthy for a traditional thesis. As a result, I thought it useful to suggest how you might consider reading this thesis based on your own experiences and preferences.

The thesis has five chapters and six appendices, as per Figure 4 below.

CHAPTERS		APPENDICES	
1	Introduction	A	Human Synergistics Theory & Methodology
2	Methodology	B	CEO Leadership/Impact Data
3	Narratives	C	Methodology Supplement
4	Seven Metaphors for Leadership Transformation	D	The Peter Fuda Story
5	Conclusion	E	Resonance with Management Practitioners
		F	DVD of CEO Presentations

Figure 4: Structure of this Thesis

If you are already knowledgeable about, and predisposed toward narrative as a qualitative method of enquiry, then you may consider skipping *Chapter 2. Methodology*, and go straight to *Chapter 3. Narratives*.

If you are not knowledgeable about narrative, or want to be convinced about the quality of the CEO narratives from a methodological standpoint, then I suggest you read *Chapter 2. Methodology*, before going on to read *Chapter 3. Narratives*.

If you find *Chapter 2. Methodology* sufficient, you may chose to ignore *Appendix C – Methodology Supplement*, which provides additional and very extensive detail on my methodological approach.

If you are familiar with Human Synergistics philosophies and tools, you may choose to ignore *Appendix A - Human Synergistics Theory & Methodology*.

If you know me, then you may choose to ignore *Appendix D – The Peter Fuda Story.* It attempts to provide the reader with an understanding of my life experiences and learnings that may have shaped my interactions with the CEOs.

If you do not know me, are concerned about my motives or potential to this study, then you may like to read *Appendix D – The Peter Fuda Story* before you read *Chapter 3. Narratives*.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. EMERGENCE OF A RESEARCH QUESTION

2.1.1. <u>Looking backward, looking forward</u>

> It is quite true what Philosophy says: that life must be understood backwards. But that makes one forget the other saying: that it must be lived – forwards. The more one ponders this, the more it comes to mean that life in the temporal existence never becomes quite intelligible, precisely because at no moment can I find complete quiet to take the backward-looking position (p. 111). Soren Kierkegaard (Danish Philosopher)

> Although life is lived prospectively, we can only make sense of it retrospectively. Carl Weick

The quotes above by the Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard, and American Organisational theorist Karl Weick, resonate deeply with me for several reasons. Firstly, I feel they are representative of the purpose of this thesis, and how it actually came about. On the one hand, this thesis was largely born out of a desire to deconstruct the 'socially constructed success' that the clients of my management consultancy were experiencing, and the attention and accolades that I was receiving by association. On the other hand, it was also born out of a desire to inform the future with regards to the work practices of my own organisation, and the work of other practitioners who might be influenced by this study.

Karl Weick's stance appeals to my natural inclination toward sense making through an ongoing process of reflection and action. Both authors reveal an inherent dilemma; the challenge of ever finding a long enough pause in order to take complete stock of the 'past', and the inability of such knowledge to provide clear grounds for predictable action. In order to complete this thesis, I have had to put somewhat artificial boundaries around the leadership journeys of seven CEOs who take centre stage in this study; effectively 2001-2008 for most of the sample. I say artificial because beyond 2008, the CEOs have continued to evolve, my colleagues and I have continued to reflect on our learnings and amend our practices, and the marketplace attention for this study has forced public interaction and dialogue on our collective learnings and findings well in advance of its formal assessment.

The research question focusing this study must be understood as the consequence of a process of evolution and reflection. Settling on the research question *'what does it take for a traditional manager to transform into a contemporary leader?'* was not a rational, theory driven exercise of deductive reasoning and hypothesis formulation. Rather, it was a fairly opportunistic point of convergence between my experiences and passions, the ready availability of data, the advice of my supervising professor Richard Badham, and what Richard felt was an extremely rare set of intimate CEO relationships and documented successful change outcomes. My aim over the next three pages is to explain the process by which I came to settle on this research question. I begin with as short description of the client 'success' stories that paved the way for this research study to begin with.

2.1.2. A high strike rate of success

In 2007, as I was due to begin researching a doctoral thesis, my colleagues and I found ourselves in a position where, in the perception of others, we had a very high strike rate of apparent 'success' in the field of organisational and leadership transformation. Success is, of course, a highly subjective concept. For my consulting organisation, success is defined by our vision of 'CEO referenceable outcomes'. A reference is defined by a written testimonial or short case study authored by a client CEO for public consumption. Outcomes are defined by a positive shift in the performance metrics of the client organisation during the period of our formal engagement. These metrics could include increased financial performance, increased customer satisfaction, increased leadership effectiveness, and increased employee engagement, among others. By 2007, I had about 20 such cases of 'success' in six years and all of these may be read at *www.tap.net.au*.

Whereas it is commonly quoted that 70% of all change efforts fail to reach their desired outcomes (Kotter, 1995; Miller, 2002; Higgs & Rowland, 2005; Keller & Aiken, 2008), we found ourselves in a position where more than 90% of our clients provided written evidence that our joint efforts at change had met or exceeded their desired outcomes. Both Richard and I felt that all of these stories provided many worthy avenues for study. In order to narrow the research agenda, I started looking for commonalities in the stories.

2.1.3. Leadership 'transformation' as a common ingredient

From a personal perspective, I was fascinated, though not entirely surprised by the fact that within many of the stories of organisational transformation there often sat a concurrent story of CEO transformation. By CEO transformation, I mean 'has shifted their leadership from predominantly Defensive to predominantly Constructive', as measured by the Leadership/Impact® (Cooke, 1997) tool that I have already explained in the Introduction to this thesis.

 From the 20 public 'success' stories that I had the potential to study, 16 of those stories included a CEO who had undertaken a measure of Leadership/Impact. Of those 16, ten had undertaken two measures of Leadership/Impact; test and retest. Of those ten, nine had data that demonstrated a shift from a predominantly Defensive to a predominantly Constructive Leadership/Impact. Our apparent success in 'transforming' senior leaders over the years drew considerable attention from a range of stakeholders, including Human Synergistics themselves. Every year, Human Synergistics runs Australia's largest conference on leadership and culture which is attended by thousands of senior executives and change agents. At the time of beginning my doctoral research in 2007, three CEOs from our client base had given an address at the annual conference as key note speakers, sharing their journey of organisational and personal transformation. Since then, another three CEOs from our client base have spoken at the conference, which takes the total to six CEOs in seven years. In addition, our case study for MasterCard Australia and New Zealand was studied by Australian Distinguished Professor of Management, Dexter Dunphy, and included as one of five case studies of successful transformation in his book *In Great*

Company: Unlocking the Secrets of Cultural Transformation (2006), which he co-authored with Human Synergistics.

2.1.4. Narrowing the research agenda

As Richard quizzed me in greater depth on the subject that I will loosely refer to herein as 'leadership transformation', he was struck by what he termed a 'unique blend of CEO access, close personal relationships, my very personal involvement in the journeys of these CEOs as their coach, and quantitative, third party evidence of transformation.' I was already heading down the path of studying leadership transformation for different reasons. Shifting the impact of senior leaders has been my personal area of passion and focus for some time; I have always felt a great sense of fulfilment and pride in helping leaders to realise their professional and personal ambitions. At the same time, because of our case studies and my growing public profile, I began to experience a pull from a wide range of stakeholders wanting to understand our 'recipe for success' in the leadership space. People were asking my colleagues and I 'how do you do it?' and 'what is your magic formula?'

In a way, these questions were very humbling. In another way, they were quite intimidating. My organisation and our practices had evolved organically around our clients and our people over time, and along with it, so had our so called 'formula' for leadership transformation. It seemed to me that the more I developed 'expertise' in this area, the more I realised the limits of my knowledge in analysing what appeared to be a fairly complex phenomenon. Turning to the practitioner oriented leadership literature didn't help. Most of what I read depicted an idealistic image of a heroic, forever confident, all-knowing, and all seeing leader. My dilemma was not so much with the content of these texts; they described characteristics that many would aspire to, such as integrity, courage, vision and discipline. It was just that after some eight years in the field, I had never met the god-like individual they described. Moreover, I had never read the book that described the process by which mere mortals transformed into the aforementioned gods.

It became apparent to Richard and I that I was ideally placed to explore in some depth what leaders saw to be the 'formula' or 'system' that enables leadership transformation.

2.1.5. Seven CEOs take centre stage

I narrowed my target subjects from nine CEOs to seven by looking more broadly than just their Leadership/Impact data. I wanted those CEOs who had not only transformed their own impact, but also transformed the impact of their colleagues. I wanted CEOs where I felt that there was qualitative feedback of transformation from their colleagues, and that these colleagues would be willing to go on the record with their honest insights and reflections. I wanted CEOs who had experienced positive performance shifts across a range of organisational metrics, and who had continued on an upward career trajectory beyond

their measures of impact[3]. But most of all, I wanted those CEOs who would let me tell the most honest and brutal account of their journeys, warts and all; not the sanitised and retrospectively clever texts that so frustrated me.

I was fortunate that the seven CEOs in my target sample all said yes to involvement in my study – even before I settled on the final question. Figure 5 below lists the seven CEOs[4], their organisations, and the year in which I commenced my very first formal engagement with each of them.

CEO (or equivalent leadership status)	TITLE & ORGANISATION	YEAR OF FIRST ENGAGEMENT
Dr Alan McGilvray	▪ CEO and Chairman of Bayer Australia and New Zealand	2001
Mike Shove	▪ CEO of Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC) Australia	2003
Jim Varghese	▪ Director General (DG) in the Queensland Government for The Department of Education ▪ DG of the Department of Employment and Training ▪ DG of the Department of Primary Industries	2003
Clynton Bartholomeusz	▪ Managing Director (MD) of Beiersdorf Australia and New Zealand	2004
Tim Castree	▪ MD of George Patterson Partners Sydney ▪ CEO of Leo Burnett Australia ▪ Executive Vice President, Global Managing Director of MediaVest	2005
Paul Timmins	▪ MD of Getronics Australia	2005
Dennis Fox	▪ CEO of Asteron Australia and New Zealand	2005

Figure 5: The 7 CEOs in this Study

2.1.6. The research question is born

At this point, I proposed to Richard that my research question should be '*what does it take for a CEO to shift from a predominantly Defensive impact to a predominantly Constructive impact?*' Richard was concerned that this question was too technical and potentially inaccessible to my target audiences for the DBA; namely, management practitioners and academics. In a desire to move away from the jargon of the tool we unpicked the notions of 'Defensive' and 'Constructive' leadership, and likened the former to the management control paradigm that underpinned 'traditional' management models, which assumed that people must be tightly managed in order to conform or align to a rationally defined organisational agenda set by the top echelons of leaders (Barnard, 1938; Selznick, 1948; Bass, 1985; Gronn, 1999). The latter was likened to more 'contemporary' models of leadership; a more dispersed, collaborative approach

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[3] Human Synergistics theorises about a causal link between leadership, culture and organisational performance. Generally speaking, my data appears consistent with this link based on the leadership and organisational outcomes experienced concurrently by the 7 participating CEOs (outlined in detail in Section 3.1). However, I wish to make explicit that hypothesising about the link between leadership and organisational transformation is beyond the scope of the present thesis. Instead, the present thesis focuses on illuminating the process of transformation in leaders, and the organisational metrics of success are noted for contextual purposes. Despite this, in the spirit of the narrative methodology the reader may draw their own conclusions on possible connections from the forthcoming narratives and metaphors presented in chapters 3 and 4. This is also a stream of potential future research.

[4] While some of the CEOs may have different titles, they are all heads of organisations and will loosely be referred to herein as 'CEOs' for the sake of simplicity.

in which the purpose of leadership is to tap into the higher order motivations of people or 'followers', empowering and supporting them to achieve shared goals (Senge, 1990; Bennis, 1994; O'Toole, 1995; Kotter, 1996; Wheatley, 1999; Kets de Vries 2006).

My selection of terminology ('traditional manager' to denote a Defensive profile and 'contemporary leader' to denote a Constructive profile) may also be legitimated by the Human Synergistics Leadership/Impact diagnostic itself. In conjunction with their shift toward a more Constructive impact, the 7 CEOs in the sample made a notable shift (as perceived by their respondents according to Likert scale indicator) from "A traditional, day-to-day, manager" to "A visionary, future-oriented, leader", as measured by the Leadership/Impact *Effectiveness* data[5]. For the sake of brevity, the terms "visionary, future-oriented, leader" has been simplified to 'contemporary leader' in the present thesis.

After much debate, we settled on a broad research question *'what does it take for a traditional manager to transform into a contemporary leader?'* While this was operationalised through the use of the Human Synergistics tenants of 'Defensive' and 'Constructive' leadership, the aim was to throw light on this more general interest and concern.

As I began developing my formal research proposal, I did so with the naive confidence of someone who felt ideally placed to uncover some type of 'system' or 'model' for 'leadership transformation'. Little did I know that I would shortly enter into three conversations that would seriously confront, and quite radically alter my approach to operationalising my newly defined research question.

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[5] More information on 'Effectiveness' as part of the Leadership/Impact process is available in Appendix 1.2. if required.

2.2. THREE CONVERSATIONS PAVE THE WAY FOR A NARRATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLGY

2.2.1. Conversation 1

I am a prostitute. I do whatever it takes to get the result. Each time it is different (Manfred Kets de Vries, 2006).

The quote above, as it is recalled by Richard Badham and I, is from a conversation with Manfred Kets de Vries following a lecture that he gave in Sydney. Kets de Vries is a Clinical Professor of Leadership Development who holds the *Raoul de Vitry d'Avaucourt Chair of Leadership Development* at INSEAD. He is one of six people to have been awarded with an International Leadership Lifetime Achievement Award for his founding work in the development of leadership as a field and as a discipline, and has authored, co-authored, or edited of more than thirty books and published over 300 scientific papers. As a consultant, he has advised clients across the U.S.A., Canada, Europe, Africa and Asia including Accenture, Bang & Olufsen, GE Capital, Heineken, Lego, National Australia Bank, and Nokia, among many others.

Richard asked Kets de Vries "what model do you use in your leadership transformation initiatives?" Kets de Vries responded with a broad smile and told us that he has many methods and tools that he applies professionally, but he admitted that when in a specific consulting situation he acts like a 'bricoleur'; selecting, mixing and adapting in an iterative process of exploring what 'works' in context – something he described dramatically as 'prostitute'.

2.2.2. Conversation 2

The Kets de Vries encounter had a profound effect on Richard and I for different reasons. For me, I felt I had met a kindred spirit in the consulting world, a person who shared my consulting pragmatism. For Richard, this was a critical moment in terms of the research methodology, a moment that presented both a dilemma and an innovation at the same time. The dilemma was the realisation that it would be near impossible to establish causality for leadership transformation through close scrutiny of the standard techniques used by a consulting organisation and their identified impact. Rather, each case of transformation was situation specific in terms of both the techniques employed and the context in which they were applied. Isolating the variables at play in each transformation would not be possible, or desirable for that matter. The innovation was in the form of an alternative methodology. Richard proposed that we document each case of leadership transformation through narrative. Only through attention to the individual contexts in which each CEO had 'lived' the phenomenon of leadership transformation could we hope to meaningfully capture and present a rich picture of the cases of transformation we were witnessing.

At first I was conflicted by Richard's proposition. On the one hand, I appreciated the subtleties and complexities that were inherent in each case, and was positively predisposed toward narrative and storytelling as powerful mechanisms for conveying complex topics with impact. On the other hand, selfishly, I had instinctively thought that a more traditional grounded theory approach would better enable me to leverage my doctoral work into my company's consulting practices. Somewhat prematurely,

I believed that the proximity and longevity of my CEO relationships would afford me a rare and valuable opportunity to uncover the 'essence' of leadership transformation; to unveil an unprecedented level of 'truth' as opposed to modern stereotypes or idealistic notions. With the best of intentions, I wanted to document this insight and turn it into a model or framework that would establish a new benchmark for leadership practices. I'd always had an affinity for creating simplicity and cut-through from complexity. At this point, I had assumed that grounded theory would be my methodological vehicle of choice.

When I voiced my reasoning to Richard, I was not prepared for his challenge. I remember his words vividly;

> You know Peter; people have dedicated their lives to one part of one part of any given model. With all due respect, why do you think your model would be any more special than any of the ones that you have criticised? I believe your opportunity lies in providing a platform for us to hear the CEOs voices, in depth, on this complex and problematic issue. Imagine if you create a stage where your CEOs could tell honest, compelling stories about how they were able to transform their leadership. I don't think that's been done before; and practitioners would be delighted to read such stories and think through what it means for them (Richard Badham, 2007).

Richard's words resonated deeply with me, and what I interpreted was that firstly, I was overly ambitious, and secondly, I was at the risk of oversimplifying a complex phenomenon into a simple model.

2.2.3. Conversation 3

When I am deeply challenged by something, it is my personal style to bounce ideas off others. It was around this time that I brought my newest employee and soon to be research assistant Skye Phillips into the conversation. I had hired Skye a year earlier as a researcher for our CEO and change agent think tank events and my media work, which in turn fed the substance of our consulting practices. While Skye was only 23 at the time, I had been impressed by her academic achievements at a relatively young age. Her research in organisational change and knowledge creation had been recognised internationally by the American Academy of Management, and locally by the Australian Psychology Institute. By way of a partnership with one of Australia's largest public enterprises, Skye's research was also very practically oriented toward business. In checking her references, I learned that not only was she a very substantive researcher, she shared my penchant for challenging convention. As I soon found out, she was not shy of challenging me either.

While I was very keen to get Skye's insights on my research methodology, I wasn't prepared for the reverse mentoring that I received. Rather than presenting me with a rundown of the methodologies as I was expecting, Skye used a series of questions to help me reach my own conclusions, and in fact, point out some flaws in my thinking. This was a technique I often used with clients, and I must say that again I was humbled to be on the opposite end of it.

The first question that Skye asked me was "what is it about grounded theory that actually appeals to you?" I have since reflected on this question with Skye, and the subtext behind her question was "your end game is an elegant and simplistic model, but you are at risk of falling into the reductionist trap that you have so often criticised of others". Essentially, Skye had captured the essence of my conversation with

Richard. I was becoming increasingly heartened by the idea that I could bring the CEO voice to the front and centre of the research, rather than models or theory rising to the fore. In my mind, each of the CEOs had achieved amazing feats and capturing the experiences and voices of these CEOs had the potential to impact others in a way that was far greater than a model or a shopping list of steps.

Skye's second question was more specific; "is leadership transformation (a) something that can be more or less 'unveiled' and 'mapped out' through a systematic series of enquiries, or (b), something that can best be understood holistically, through the subtleties, nuances and idiosyncrasies of lived experience and unique social context of each CEO?" Essentially, Skye had captured the essence of the Kets de Vries conversation, and the more I thought about it, the answer was definitely the latter of the two options, no question in mind.

Skye's third question confirmed the choice for me; "can you possibly start from scratch, suspending your personal judgement on what it takes for leaders to transform their leadership?" We both knew that the answer was a definite 'no'. Skye had tapped into one of my concerns surrounding this doctorate, as I had indeed started to grow nervous about how I would navigate the 'problem' of my involvement with the CEOs' transformation, and my subjectivity on the matter. My personal journey was intertwined with the journeys of the CEOs I had worked with. I had been their leadership coach, and played a prominent role in their transformation. I was going to be inherently biased in terms of what it took to transform, and it would be difficult if not impossible to shut out my prejudices. And I wasn't sure I even wanted to, considering that I may hold some important pieces of the puzzle.

My opportunity was to provide an alternative conversation to the positivist, empirical approach to studying leadership by documenting the reflections of those who had successfully 'transformed'. By doing so, it was my desire to bring the voice of the CEOs to the fore, illuminating leadership transformation from a different angle, and perhaps challenging some existing theories and stereotypes of leaders.

2.2.4. Research limitations (hurdles) and establishment of a research team

In the forthcoming sections of this thesis, I will set out to show the reader what is hopefully a very considered, academically rigorous approach to narrative writing. That said, no method can ever be perfect, and there will always be research limitations contingent upon one's personal ideology. In the spirit of generating a reflexive piece of research, I have chosen to highlight here three key research 'limitations', or 'hurdles' as I prefer to call them. Hurdle one is my potential to bias the research given my proximity to the CEOs. Hurdle two involves my lack of scientific formulas and positivist definitions of 'leadership transformation'. Hurdle three involves how I will go about constructing narratives that are beyond mere fiction and fantasy, and demonstrate their value for management practitioners. In the forthcoming sections of the thesis, the reader may deem how successful I am at 'jumping' each of the hurdles.

Also in the spirit of reflexivity, at this point I wish to make explicit the formation of my research team. I wish to highlight rather than suppress the critical role Skye has played in this doctoral research; firstly

because it is honest, and secondly because I think our partnership has increased the quality and rigour of this research substantially. In simple terms, along with Richard, Skye has played the role of 'methodology martyr'.

From a research standpoint, this interdependent partnership of Richard, Skye and I is why I will often alternate between using the word 'we' versus 'I' when I am describing the research process. As Richard, Skye and I explored alternative methodologies, I was excited by the prospect that there was an alternative to the positivist tradition of research that would allow me to bring my strengths and beliefs to the fore; namely, social constructionism. In the following chapter, I will share with the reader how I came to re-conceptualise my research question through the social constructionist lens.

2.3. RE-CONCEPTUALISING THE RESARCH QUESTION THROUGH A SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONIST LENS

2.3.1. A community of like-minded people

> "... since human beings are frequently stupid, institutional meanings tend to become simplified in the process of transmission, so that the given collection of institutional 'formulae' can be readily learned and memorized by successive generations" (Berger & Luckman, 1966:70)

The quote above is an excerpt from *The Social Construction of Reality,* by the forefathers of the social constructionist movement, American sociologist and Lutheran theologian Peter Berger and German sociologist Thomas Luckman. While undoubtedly a little cheeky, the quote appeals to me because it is representative of the epistemological transition that was occurring in my mind as I moved away from the potentially reductionist method of conceptualising my research question.

Since I was not undertaking an empirical investigation of isolating variables and deducting hypotheses from the literature, it was Richard's suggestion that a positivist methodology was not desirable. Rather, we chose an interpretive, social constructionist[6] lens in order to explore the phenomenon of leadership transformation in a holistic manner through narrative, taking into account the social and cultural contexts in which the transformation was experienced. I was comfortable operating on the edges of conventionality, and the fact that I had Richard, the MGSM's Associate Dean of Research ushering me down this path gave me the confidence to explore this territory.

Fundamental to Berger and Luckman's work was the rejection of the view that the social world is an objective reality. 'Reality' is said to be a social construction, built out of meanings which are social in origin and social in persistence. People are active creators and interpreters of their own social worlds, and the meaning of an entity, organization or event can only be derived through one's relationships and dialogues with others. Language and conversation according to social constructionists, do not 'describe' reality but serve to 'create' reality and give meaning (Gergen, 2005). The notions of historicality and context are important to their analysis, as is institutionalisation and legitimisation of 'objectivised' reality.

My exploration led me to a community of constructionists voicing their concern over the positivist, empirical approach to leadership studies, and echoing my dissatisfaction toward overly idealistic or overly simplified approaches (e.g. Weick, 1979; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 1996; Grint, 2000; Osborne, 2002; Pye, 2005). In the subsequent sections of this chapter, I will draw upon these authors in order to express why I feel it is the most desirable lens through which to address my research question.

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[6] I wish to make clear that despite the apparent similarity, the *social 'constructionist'* theory as referred to here is *not* synonymous with my use of the terms '*Constructive' leadership,* the latter which refers to the four Constructive leadership styles (Achievement, Self-Actualising, Humanistic-Encouraging and Affiliative) within the Human Synergistics Circumplex (referred to earlier in the introduction and in more detail in Appendix A). There will be a discussion in subsequent sections in terms of how a Constructive Leadership/Impact may be viewed within the social constructionist framework.

2.3.2. 'Camera obscura' gives way

Leadership is perhaps one of the most observed but least well understood social phenomenon, with no one unifying theory, nor even a unifying definition. In what are perhaps two of the most comprehensive reviews of leadership literature examining over 5000 published works, Stogdill (1974) and Bass (1991) concluded that there were almost as many definitions of leadership as there are people who have attempted to define the term. In a similar vein, upon an analysis of 350 definitions of leadership in the past 75 years, Bennis and Nanus (1985:4) concluded the following:

> Decades of academic analysis have given us more than 350 definitions of leadership. Literally thousands of empirical investigations of leaders have been conducted in the last 75 years alone, but no clear and unequivocal understanding exists as to what distinguishes leaders from non-leaders and...[perhaps more importantly for the present study] what distinguishes effective leaders from ineffective leaders.

Osborn (2002) argues further that a singular theory of effective leadership has not been revealed because the definition changes considerably over time and across boundaries. Despite this diversity, one may well be inclined to ask which definition or 'boundaries' I subscribe to, or off the back of whose definition do I base my claim that a leader has successfully transformed from a 'traditional manager' to a 'contemporary leader'.

It is here that the epistemological assumptions of the social constructionist approach allows me to step sideways from the rife debate in the extant literature, and propose an alternative way of operationalising my research question that is not dependent on me proffering an essentialist, a priori definition of leadership transformation. Pye, drawing on the works of Karl Weick (1979) in her sense making stance, echoes my position that declaring the epistemological grounds of my work is more important than "cutting a path through the jungle of extant leadership literature" (2005). While I use the Human Synergistics definition of leadership to operationalise the seven cases of 'transformation', and personally believe in the validity and usefulness of this construct, the stories, themes and arguments presented in this thesis do not depend upon an acceptance of this view as 'the' definition of leadership. Nor is it reliant on any specific view of the skills and capabilities required of such leaders.

Many constructionists in the leadership space refer to the influential works of Keith Grint, who advocates that "one of the main reasons that we have so much difficulty in explaining leadership and in trying to enhance the leadership qualities and skills of those who are leaders is that we have adopted a philosophical perspective that obscures rather than illuminates the phenomenon" (2000:4). This 'obscuring perspective' is the logical positivist conceptualisation of leadership and the empiric method of study which has dominated leadership thinking over several decades and arguably, is still the dominant model in many of the 'new' contemporary approaches today (Gergen & Thatchenkery, 1996). The positivist approach has largely adopted a modernist, individualistic view of the leader as a rational agent; a concrete being that can be objectively pursued. Generally, this approach assumes that successful leadership diffuses top down from central sources, that an analysis of the origin of leadership explains

peoples' behaviour, and that leadership is ostensibly defined by whoever is in authority. The constructionist lens gives us an alternative view.

2.3.3. Leadership through a social constructionist lens

Grint (2000, 2005) through the social constructionist lens has paved the way for a new conceptualisation of leadership. He uses term 'constitutive leadership' to describe leadership as an inherently social phenomenon, wherein the emergence of leadership qualities is mutually constituted by the various subjective accounts and interpretations of stakeholders.

Within this perspective, 'effective' leaders are not discrete individuals independent of a system of social relations. Effective leaders, or in the language of my research question 'leaders who have transformed', can only be judged as having done so in the *perception of others*. Therefore, there is no way to objectively assess whether a certain leadership style is 'appropriate' for the current environment, or 'superior' to other leadership styles, or even 'different' than it was at a previous point in time. Furthermore, there is no way to objectively assert that any one person's perception is more 'correct' than another's. This is not to suggest that an anarchistic free-for-all should exist, and that leaders should abandon any efforts to aspire to a mutually desired mode of leadership and act as they please. As Grint importantly notes, "...leadership still must be perceived as 'appropriate', but what that means is an interpretive issue. By implication, leaders must respond to the culture within which they operate, but...they are also capable of changing that culture" (2000:3).

At any given moment, followers are essential to the definition of leadership. Leaders *and* followers are part of ongoing social networks and institutional structures within which individual identities, qualities and behaviours form part of an ongoing process of constitution. As explained by Mangham and Pye:

> ...the measure of any piece of behaviour is the response to it: following is the measure of leading, and leading the measure of following. Neither makes any sense in the absence of its effects...We take some particular activity to be an example of good leading by the followers playing their parts; a good piece of following is known by a leader playing his or her part...Acceptance of [this view], of course, implies that leading/following is not simply a matter of individuals and roles but also an instance of process... (1991: 59).

The role of the leader in this view is very different to the assumptions inherent in the traditional management paradigm. In the words of Grint (2000:6), given that there is no objective reality, "what leaders must do...is construct an imaginary community that followers can feel part of." Mangham and Pye assert that the leader's job is "bringing people together, who in an involving fashion construct and reconstruct patterns of response such that mutual expectations are fulfilled" (1991:46). Hierfetz (1994) notes this mirroring and following is a crucial component of the 'proper' role of leadership...and the motivation and mobilisation of this responsibility distinguishes successful from unsuccessful leaders. This is highly aligned with the philosophy inherent within the Leadership/Impact tool used to describe the transformational journey of each of the seven CEOs in this study. The concept of impact relates to the behaviours that the leader motivates and encourages in *others*, rather than the behaviours the leader displays him or herself. As stated by the Managing Director of Human Synergistics, Rob Cooke:

> Managers cannot be considered to "lead" (i.e. to guide or direct) unless they in some way transform, shape, or influence the organizational context of members and the ways in which they approach their work and interact with one another. The effectiveness of a leader, therefore, depends on the magnitude and direction of – as well as the strategies used to achieve – this impact (2009:16).

In this respect, the social constructionist perspective provides a wider definition of success that is not limited to the individual leader, but rather, success is a social achievement. This is representative of our observation that our leadership transformation case studies sat within wider indicators of 'success', including the CEO's team transforming their leadership, and the organisation's concurrent achievement of articulated aspirations.

Having been influenced by the social constructionist principles listed above, I will now more systematically address the implications of such principles for my research question '*what does it take for a traditional manager to transform into a contemporary leader?*'

2.3.4. <u>Viewing the research question through the social constructionist lens</u>

At face value, several elements of my research question may seem counterintuitive to the social constructionist approach. Firstly, the imposition the of the terms 'traditional manager' versus 'contemporary leader' would seem to indicate that I am in a privileged position to be able to categorise leaders into either an ideal or a non-ideal camp of beings. Secondly, it may be argued that the tool and approach that I am using to operationalise the question are grounded in behavioural theories that were formulated according to the positivist tradition of leadership that potentially fall under the social constructionist critique. Thirdly, social constructionists may question my ability to measure 'transformation' at all.

The simplest and most general response to my overall self-critique is that the Leadership/Impact tool was first and foremost a metric to determine the 'price for entry' into the study; a way of identifying leaders where something appeared to have changed or shifted that was not dependent on my subjective judgement alone. The social constructionist perspective also aligns with the Leadership/Impact tool's focus on going above and beyond *individual* Leadership/Impact data, to include team and organisational metrics of success, both qualitative and quantitative. In order to be transparent about subject selection with the reader, in *Chapter 3.1 Subject Selection Justification* I outline in detail all of the reasons why I feel that each of the seven CEOs in this thesis is worthy of study.

My second response to my self-critique above is that the Leadership/Impact tool and the associated terminology was the 'reality' through with the subjects lived the experience of 'leadership transformation'. As Grint puts it, "there is no way to get to the world without going through language...only through words that describe and categorise" (Grint, 2000:11). In my experience, the Leadership/Impact tool created a shared language between the CEO and I, and the CEO and his colleagues, for defining and working toward a desired state that was articulated by the CEO. At the outset of my research, I considered removing all reference to the tool including the visual Circumplex discs that graphically depict each measure, and avoiding 'jargonistic' terminology in favour of what I thought were more colloquial terms

for my audience such as 'traditional' and 'contemporary'. However, I came to discover that the language of the tool was so deeply rooted in the CEOs' recollections of their experience that it would have been inauthentic to disguise it. Instead, I have appendicised a glossary of terminology pertaining to the Leadership/Impact styles and strategies (see *Appendix A – Human Synergistics Theory and Methodology*), so that my audience may understand the language a little better during the reading of the narratives.

My third and final response to my self-critique is to suggest that the tool and the methodology behind it are in fact largely aligned with the philosophies of social constructionism. For a moment, if we suspend my own personal judgement that *Constructive* (contemporary) leadership is a preferred model of leadership - which I will subsequently address, four synergies can be found.

1. Leaders set their own aspiration or 'ideal' impact, that is, the way they would ideally like to motivate and encourage others to behave.

The leader's *ideal* or preferred impact is determined by the individual - albeit selecting from pre-given options, and is usually a culmination of experience, thinking styles, values and the culture in which he or she operates. Interestingly, leaders almost universally adopt a largely Constructive *ideal*, as revealed in the Australian and New Zealand aggregate data set of Leadership/Impact measures. Figure 6 below depicts the generalised *ideal* and Actual impacts of Australian and New Zealand managers in the Human Synergistics Leadership/Impact database. It shows a largely Constructive (blue) *ideal* impact, and a mixed Actual Impact with Aggressive-Defensive (red) and Passive-Defensive (green) on par with blue impact.
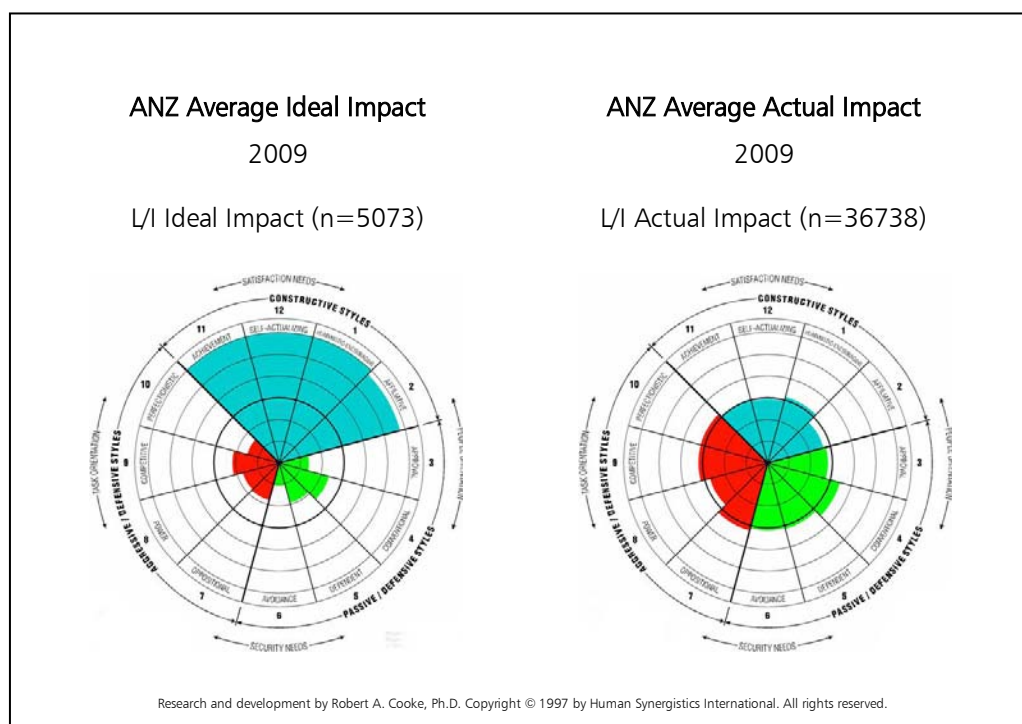
Figure 6: Average ANZ Ideal Impact data Vs Average ANZ Actual impact data 2009

In addition, the tool also reveals a general discrepancy between what leaders' desire as their *ideal* impact and what their colleagues perceive as their *actual* impact. This uncovers a systematic gap between leaders 'espoused theory' and their 'theories in use' (Argyris & Schon, 1974).

2. Measuring a leaders' impact is very different to measuring their behaviour.

In harmony with the social constructionist view, imparting judgement on the leader's behaviour is not the focal point in the Leadership/Impact methodology. Rather, the focus is on leaders' impact on the behaviours and actions of others; that is, the manner in which they motivate, encourage and support others toward their agenda. In this sense, leaders do not succeed unless their subordinates and colleagues become increasingly more Constructive in the manner in which they approach their work.

3. The tool 'measures' and 'collates' peoples' subjective impressions of leaders' impact.

While my subjective perception of a leader's transformation is arguably no more or less important than anyone else's, the Leadership/Impact tool allows leaders to collect the subjective impressions of their impact through the eyes of the people that work closely with them. Departing a little from the social constructionist emphasis on 'followers', the Leadership/Impact tool considers a leaders' impact on subordinates, *and* peers, *and* their direct manager.[7]

4. My definition of 'transformation' is expressed as a verb implying change, or closing of the gap between leaders' ideal impact (as articulated by them) and their actual impact (as experienced by others).

My definition is not a noun describing a finite state of 'transformation' from one fixed state to another. I do not aspire to study the characteristics, behaviours or personalities of leaders who have 'transformed', but rather to understand the process each CEO underwent in making a substantial shift in his impact.

The leaders in my study have undergone varying degrees of transformation, making interesting comparisons between cases. Each leader in the study started with what the Leadership/Impact tool defines as a predominantly Aggressive-Defensive or Passive-Defensive impact. Each of the leaders in the study then shifted to a predominantly Constructive impact over time[8]. Some of the CEOs have shifted more than others and those that have not progressed so far are also interesting cases, for reasons which will be expanded upon in detail prior to the reading of the narratives.

2.3.5. <u>An upfront admission - disclosing my subjective opinion about Constructive leadership</u>

Despite my earlier critique of reductionist approaches to leadership, I do have an element of socially constructed judgement with respect to *Constructive* leadership being a desirable form of leadership in the

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[7] The leader selects his or her own sample of respondents; a sample that they deem will provide honest and useful reflections that are important to an understanding of the leader's effectiveness. This sample may vary over time as people inevitably change positions or organisations, but the criteria for selection remain consistent.

[8] *Appendix B – CEO Leadership/Impact Data* provides a statistical summary of the Leadership/Impact data for each of the CEO's Leadership/Impact measures, and a statistical breakdown of the percentage change.

post-industrial era – although the worthwhile nature of this study of narrated stories and metaphors of leadership transformation does not ultimately depend upon an acceptance of this judgement. While the Human Synergistics Australia and New Zealand *ideal* impact data outlined in Figure 6 would indicate that I am not alone in my thoughts, I do believe it is important for me to be transparent in this regard. In *Appendix D – The Peter Fuda Story*, I talk about a defining period in my professional life working at Westpac in the 1990s as it transitioned under a new CEO Bob Joss, from an Aggressive-Defensive culture to one that was far more Constructive. I witnessed the success that ensued for the bank's stakeholders as a result of this shift, and the positive difference it made in the work culture.

This experience served to establish some basic Constructive leadership principles in my mind including the need to tap into a 'satisfaction-driven' motivation in people rather than a 'security-driven' motivation, and to balance task completion with the needs of people. In addition, I wanted to pursue worthy goals, think in creative ways, build genuine relationships, and help people reach their potential. Since my Westpac experience, I have consciously applied and encouraged these leadership principles in our own little organisation and I feel that much of our 'success' emanates from these principles. More importantly, I have encouraged these principles with every client of my consulting organisation for ten years, and have consistently observed the benefits to their stakeholders.

2.3.6. Operationalising the research question

So far, I have argued that the social constructionist lens is most useful for exploring my research question, with the help of an operational tool that is in many ways strongly compatible with this approach and, in this case, is used to advance social constructionist leadership studies. With this discussion in mind, each element of my research question *'what does it take for a traditional manager to transform into a contemporary leader?'* may be operationalised in the following manner:

- *What does it take for leaders* (people who have been granted the status of superior within an institutionalised power structure),

- *...who have previously been viewed by others* (in addition to myself, a mix of direct reports, peers and a manager)

- *...as motivating and encouraging predominantly Defensive behaviours* (as defined by Human Synergistics and measured by the Leadership/Impact instrument),

- *...to change those perceptions of others* (those same people, or others who fill the roles of direct reports, peers and manager, but who still meet the same selection criteria),

- *...to see them as motivating and encouraging Constructive behaviours* (as defined and measured by the Leadership/Impact instrument)...

- *...between two points in time* (at least one year apart).

In order to answer this operationalised research question, it is imperative that my research methodology enables me to understand the social context in which 'transformation' occurred, and allows me to

illuminate the 'transformation' from multiple perspectives. In the next section, I draw largely from Barbara Czarniawska and her works on applying a social constructionist perspective, to outline the contribution that narrative approaches to organisation studies can make addressing such issues. Following Czarniawska, I draw upon several philosophers to communicate my stance; namely Paul Ricoeur, Mikhail Bakhtin, Richard Rorty, and Alfred Schutz, among others.

2.4. A NARRATIVE METHODOLOGY

2.4.1. <u>'Life' as narrative</u>

> It is useful to think of the enacted narrative as the most typical form of social life (MacIntyre in Czarniawska, 2004:3)… This need not be an ontological claim; life might or might not be an enacted narrative but conceiving of it as such provides a rich source of insight (Czarniawska, 2004:3).

While literary theory appropriates the term 'narrative' to describe a 'novelistic piece of work', narrative may be considered in a broader realm as a 'mode of consciousness', as per Czarniawska's quote above. In terms of my research, Czarniawska encourages me to understand that life may not literally 'be' a narrative, but it is a useful metaphor for exploring the way in which we as humans, exist and make sense of our existence within a socially constructed world. Czarniawska likens 'living' to 'writing a book'; a notion that is known in many languages and cultures, and goes on to explain a prominent idea in the narrative or autobiographical genres:

> A narrative of an individual history is placed in a narrative of social history (be it a family or a nation) or even in a history of the narrative. As to the first narrative (that of an individual history), its importance is connected with the fact that in order to understand their own lives people put them into narrative form – and they do the same when they try to understand the lives of others. Thus actions acquire meaning by gaining a place in a narrative of life (Czarniawska, 2004:5).

For me, Czarniawska's prose is compelling in its assertion of a multiplicity of narratives occurring concurrently. It became clear to me that in order to theorise about the 'grand narrative' of leadership transformation, whether this means drawing out themes for change or perhaps lessons learnt from the actors, I would need to first to make sense of each individual case as a holistic narrative paying careful attention to the social and cultural contexts in which it played out. Czarniawska illuminates this point through the works of Alfred Schutz.

> It is impossible to understand human conduct while ignoring its intentions, while ignoring the settings in which they make sense. Such settings may be practices, institutions, cultures, or some other contexts created by humans, contexts which have a history, within which popular deeds and whole histories of individual actors can be and have to be situated to be intelligible. (Czarniawska, 2004:3-4)

Those of the positivist school argue that the narrative perspective as it applies to research is unproductive, unimpressive and paralysing to name a few criticisms; "formal logic does not guide meaning, level of abstraction is low, and causal links may be established in a wholly arbitrary way" (Czarniawska, 1998:2). Being a practitioner and a pragmatist at heart, it may seem ironic that I am taking a narrative approach to this thesis. A few years ago, I might have agreed with the critics; I suspect no one suffers from the instinct to simplify and systemise 'reality' into a model than consultants such as myself! But after my three pivotal conversations with Kets de Vries, Richard and Skye, I now feel very differently. The strength of the narrative for me, and its possible contribution to the management practitioner, is the possibility of 'rich' sense making within a field that is rife with competing discourses and practices.

2.4.2. Narrative as 'sense making' dialogue

> Everything should be made as simple as possible, but no simpler (Albert Einstein).

I draw upon Einstein, Weick and Czarniawska to argue that narrative is not 'unimpressive', but rather, plays a useful and important role in organisation studies and society in general. In a similar vein to Einstein, Weick proposes that complex objects necessitate complex models in his *Postulate of requisite variety* (1979). Czarniawska (2004:16) asserts that "although stories simplify the world and are therefore useful guides for action, they simplify it less than the kind of formal models that used to be revered as genuine science".

Through narrative, it is my intention to illuminate the phenomenon of 'leadership transformation' from an angle that differs to the competing discourses within the positivist tradition. In this sense, Czarniawska draws a parallel between her (and our) narrative approach and Weick's sense making stance (Czarniawska, 1998:15-16).

> ...what is needed in an equivocal, post modern world, infused with politics of representation and conflicting interests is sense making. The point is not to come up with an improved story from the field, but with an alternative or competitive stories to engage in a dialogue with the field...Narrative forms of reporting will enrich organisation studies themselves, compiling, illustrating and scrutinising logico-scientific forms of reporting. By relinquishing some aspiration to power through the claim of factuality and one to one correspondence of theory and the world, organisational studies can open their texts for negotiation and thus enter in a dialogical relationship with organisational practitioners.

The reference to practice in the latter part of the quote is of critical importance to me. My argument is that, in agreement with Weick, a greater degree of reflexive sense making is exactly what is needed in a field that is rife with models, schemas and classifications. It is no surprise to me that while theory has proliferated, practices - and effective reflections on such practices - have remained somewhat stuck in traditional norms and operating models, as we may imply from the disjoint between Australian leaders' *Ideal* and *Actual* impact inherent in the Average Leadership/Impact data (back in Figure 6).

The contribution of narrative – and enriching narrative - goes beyond the realm of ideas. Enacted narratives are the basis for meaningful action.

2.4.3. Narrative as a basis for action – looking back, looking forward

> Meaningful action shares the constitutive features of the text; it becomes objectified by inscription, which frees it from its agent; it has relevance beyond its immediate context, and it can be read like an 'open work' (Czarniawska, 2004:4).

In the quote above, Czarniawska draws from French philosopher Paul Ricoeur (1981) to suggest that organisational narratives are both inscriptions of past performances, and scripts and staging instructions for further performances. Synonymous with this claim, to this point I have argued that the best way to make sense of leadership transformation is through the narrative approach; by interpreting each individual case of transformation with as much attention to the detailed narration of the context and social situation in which it occurs as possible. In effect, I have argued that the best way to 'look back' is through such

narratives. The resultant documented narratives then become a product from which to inform the basis for future actions, or 'narratives' if you like.

As I shared my desire for the narrative approach with the seven CEOs in the study and my wider community in fact, I was quite overcome by how favourably the idea was received. In retrospect, I need not have been so surprised. As I reflect back on my experiences over the years at various 'think tanks', conferences and forums where I have led or observed peer CEO interaction, it was generally the stories and case studies that have yielded the biggest attendance and most favourable feedback, not the presentation of models, processes and frameworks. My hope is that my target audience will be moved and inspired by the CEO narratives, though I acknowledge that different elements will resonate with different readers based on the reader's own personal 'narrative'.

As a final thought on how the narratives, once inscribed as 'texts', can inform future 'actions', I again refer to the analogy drawn from Soren Kierkegaard's quote at the front of this Methodology chapter. In my period of 'looking backward' for this research study, I have (obviously) continued to 'live forward' as I have conducted my research. My narrative works, though in their formative stages, have already been the subject of 'performances' on various stages. Several of the CEOs have used elements of their narratives to engage or educate others on leadership within their own organisations. I have already built several of my learnings, whilst in their formative stages, into my company's consulting practices. In this sense, the narrative works have taken on a life of their own beyond their purpose within the doctoral research, and I am excited by the possibilities for how they may be used in the future with my target audience.

In the following section, I will share with the reader the detailed 'methodology' that I used in order to construct and interpret my seven CEO narratives.

2.4.4. Narrative as a 'methodology'

> Method is but a reflection and a convention (sometimes only the latter). My suggestion of the narrative approach amounts to nothing more than a systematic reflection on a craft that we are practicing while doing research (Czarniawska 1998:75).

In her controversial claim above, Czarniawska advocates that there is no specific, a priori method to follow in the narrative approach to organisation studies. Rather, one may only be guided by (i) institutionalised norms, (ii) individual experimentation and (iii) self reflection, the sum total of which to me sounds like old fashioned common sense and transparency. I will now take some time to make explicit how I fared across each of Czarniawska's guide posts. I first turn to the 'institutionalised norms' that I was influenced by, including a brief discussion of the 'reflexive practices' that I engaged in as I went about my research. I will then provide for the reader a picture of the data collection and analysis phases of the research, with reference to an appendix outlining in detail the 'individual experimentation' that governed this somewhat emergent methodology.

2.4.5. Institutionalised norms: hermeneutic phenomenology and my involved stance as researcher

Czarniawska draws from the 'institutionalised norms' of anthropology to discuss the manner in which a researcher may go about observing and interpreting human experience, and thus collecting 'texts' from the field in order to create narrative works. A firmly held assumption in the anthropological camp, which Czarniawska does not necessarily subscribe to, is that conducting research within one's own field or society can result in a distorted and prejudiced view of reality that is more representative of the researcher than the researched (e.g. Leach, 1982 in Czarniawska, 1998). In my case, this would seem to be particularly problematic. I have been a coach and friend to each of the CEOs throughout their journeys. As a result, I am not only going to be biased or opinionated in terms of what I think it takes to transform, but it is likely that through my involvement with the CEOs my 'prejudice' may have largely shaped their interpretation of events. Thus our mutual recollections could be put down to little more than group think. Why would I emphasise this point? Ultimately, because I feel that our collective interpretations are of value even in light of the potential limitations and criticisms I have outlined. To support my claim, I draw from the 'institutional norms' inherent in the works of hermeneutic phenomenologists, particularly of the contemporary tradition as it relates to organisational research.

Hubert Dreyfus, phenomenological philosopher and interpreter, discusses the notion of detached contemplation in such a way that one may implicitly realise the futility of such a stance.

> According to the philosophical tradition, whether rationalist or empiricist, it is only by means of detached contemplation that we discover reality. From Plato's theoretical dialectic, which turns the mind away from the everyday world of "shadows," to Descartes' preparation for philosophy by shutting himself up in a warm room where he is free from involvement and passion...philosophers have supposed that only by withdrawing from everyday practical concerns before describing things and people can they discover how things really are (Dreyfus 1991:6).

In contrast, renowned French phenomenological philosopher, Maurice Merleau-Ponty outlines the foundational role that perception plays in our understanding of, and engagement with, the world: "we are caught up in the world and we do not succeed in extricating ourselves from it in order to achieve consciousness of it" (1962:5). Czarniawska herself positions the counter argument in relation to anthropological studies, suggesting "...bias must be weighed against the clumsy ignorance of the outsider, which can be removed only by complete acculturation - if such is possible" (1998:24).

There are several advantages to be made of my involvement with both the research and the researched. First and foremost, the longevity and closeness of my relationships arguably grants me a much higher level of trust and familiarity than a detached, external researcher would be able to generate. Secondly, it is my belief that I actually hold some important pieces of the leadership transformation 'puzzle'. While the CEO's own interpretation of 'what it took to transform' will be vital to further our collective understanding, I believe the addition of my views will enrich and provide a more holistic understanding of the transformations that occurred. Under the social constructionist perspective we have no basis to claim that the CEOs' interpretations are more privileged than my own. Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, I firmly believe that the collective sense making between me, the CEOs, and others who were involved in

their journeys will allow us to come to an enriched understanding of the nature of 'leadership transformation', which we all would appear to hold important insights on. Why our resulting 'group think' would be of any more value than anyone else's is again a matter of perception, but the fact that the CEOs and my organisation have had 'success' attributed to us from multiple public constituents suggests our collective interpretation is worthy of exploring. I place 'group think' in inverted commas purposefully, and in the subsequent section I will argue that our collective sense making of the phenomenon is not restrictive and reductionist group think, but a valuable and enriching upward hermeneutic spiral of meaning creation.

In order to navigate through my involvement in the CEOs journeys in a thoughtful, reflective way, I draw largely from the works of prominent German Phenomenologist Hans George Gadamer, and others that have followed in his theoretical footsteps by operationalising his works in applied research.

2.4.6. Co-constructing meaning through an upward 'hermeneutic spiral'

Gadamer firmly rejects the idea that a researcher's bias may be bracketed or removed from one's research efforts on the basis that "understanding is always more than merely recreating someone else's meaning. Questioning opens up possibilities of meaning, and thus what is meaningful passes into one's own thinking on the subject" (1998:378).

Gadamer emphasizes the role of pre-understanding or background understanding which he termed 'prejudices' as critical to determining what is found to be intelligible in any given situation and ultimately provides the means by which a temporal truth about a phenomena is established.

Gadamer (1998) believed shared understanding results from a fusion or consideration of 'horizons' and worldviews, which occurs via an interactive, circular and reciprocal dialogue between the meaning of a text and what is anticipated in interpretation. As it was neither possible nor desirable to separate my views or biases from my inquiry, I took several steps to ensure that I was conscious, mindful and critical of my biases or 'horizons', which are detailed in the upcoming subsection of this chapter titled *2.4.8. Self reflection through journal writing and reflexivity martyrs*. For now, I will elaborate on how the interaction of these biases and the CEO narratives produced a richer description of leadership transformation.

The metaphor of the *hermeneutic circle* is often employed to describe the cyclical manner in which meaning and interpretation is negotiated through a dynamic movement between the parts and the whole of a 'text'. The meaning one seeks in making sense of a phenomena or text is temporal and always coming into being in the specific occasion of understanding (Gadamer, 1975: 419). Hence, meaning is negotiated mutually in the act of interpretation; it is not simply discovered. Gadamer regarded understanding as never complete, and the hermeneutic circle continues until "one has reached a place of sensible meaning, free from inner contradictions, for the moment" (in Laverty, 2003:9).

For me, the hermeneutic circle is perhaps better expressed as Polish sociologist's Zygmunt Bauman's (1992) notion of the *hermeneutic spiral,* as there were multiple loops of interpretation that took us to a

higher level of insight, far from where we had begun. There are six key ways in which I may consider that we applied this metaphor.

1. I took several measures to ensure I was mindful of my own 'horizons', including an interview of me by Richard in order to get my bias on record, the inclusion of an autobiographical narrative, (refer to *Appendix D – The Peter Fuda Story*), and utilising a parallel processing method of data analysis, each of which are documented in the next section.

2. There were multiple parties involved in the spiral of meaning creation, not least of which included me and the CEOs, but also a sample of the CEOs' direct reports who had worked closely with the CEOs during the period under study. In addition, I included the reflections of several Account Directors (now called Partners) from my company who led or supported our organisational engagements with the respective CEOs; namely, Ron Schwartz on Mike, Dennis and Tim's journeys, Leanne Myers on Clynton, Paul and Tim's journeys, and Mel Cowan on Jim's journey. Since Alan was my first client, I performed the role of Account Director in his journey. Perhaps less formally but no less importantly, I would regularly bounce insights off Skye, Richard and each of the six current Partners in my company at each stage of the research, which included Ron Schwartz and Leanne Myers. In some ways, and in keeping with my collaborative learning style, I feel like this group of people acted as something akin to a 'research community' for the duration of this doctorate.

3. Data collection and interpretation were interwoven, not separate processes, and the rich layering of insights are available to the reader in detail in *Appendix C – Methodology Supplement*.

4. My understanding of the narratives and the emergent themes was never static or one-dimensional. There were several points of testing, clarifying and elaboration through dialogue with various audiences, including parties external to the study. These audiences included the Account Directors in my company mentioned above, and the many CEOs and change agents who provided me with feedback during the various speaking engagements I have completed on the subject of this study.

5. Moving from 'parts' to the 'whole' occurred at several levels. First, there were a plethora of parts including events, conversations and interpretations for each narrative that had to be woven into a holistic narrative of CEO transformation, narratives that were written and re-written in an iterative process of moving from the 'whole' story to the 'parts'. Once written, each narrative became a 'part' that formed the basis for a discussion of 'leadership transformation' as a 'whole', represented as generative metaphors, that are, my closing of the hermeneutic spiral – but deliberately only for now.

6. My hermeneutic spiral does not stop with the crafting of the narratives. Nor does it stop with the last full stop in this thesis. The CEOs respond to the narratives, and the readers will ultimately blend parts of the narratives with their own narrative, thus reaching a new meaning that goes beyond my interpretation.

2.4.7. The merits of my hermeneutic spiral

Having embraced the social constructionist's perspective, the worthiness of my hermeneutic spiral is dependent on the perception of my audience. Richard pushed me very hard to consider, why my hermeneutic spiral is good and productive spiral, as opposed to a downward spiral plunging out of control. Here, I will attempt to disclose (more so than to sell) what I believe are the merits of our collective sense making, though I would ask the reader to bear in mind that several of these claims will be pre-empting later discussion.

In the first instance, the voices give representation to different interests. The study incorporates a wide representation of voices of different interests, beyond the CEOs' and my own interpretations. In addition, I sought insights beyond the people in the study and beyond the walls of my offices regularly, and tested the resonance of my work intermittently with members of my audience (the management practitioner) in several CEO and Change Agent forums over the years in which the research was taking place. The responses from these forums served to shape and mould my work as I progressed. I would like to strongly iterate that I did not seek to arrive at 'objective reality' by seeking a wide enough range of inputs to illuminate the 'truth'. Rather, my efforts were all part of a learning experience as I sought to enrich the meaning I ascribed to the phenomenon through a multiplicity of voices and readings.

Secondly, the voices are arguably of quality. By quality, I refer in particular to the nature of the achievements that make the CEO worthy of being heard, which are clearly outlined for the reader in the chapter titled *Subject Selection Justification*, immediately following this chapter. The quality of the voices also hinges on my potential to bring out an authentic voice based on the level of trust in my relationships with the CEOs and all participants for that matter.

Third, the narratives act as a focal point for a 'dialogue' between the different voices that we feel is a good collective sense making mechanism. For example, as will be revealed a little later in the section titled *2.4.9. A Snapshot of my Emergent Methodology* and in more detail in *Appendix C – Methodology Supplement,* the many 'voices' in the study were interpreted at several levels. For example, each CEO's voice was interpreted by two Direct Reports and one Account Director from my company via a reading of the CEO's interview transcript. In turn, I interpreted each of these voices as I constructed the narratives. Skye and Richard interpreted my voice through their critique of the narratives, and then the CEOs themselves have interpreted the 'final' narrative products, that is, the collection of voices. As will be revealed in the subsection of this chapter titled *Voices*, measures were taken to ensure these voices came to the fore as opposed to being 'smoothed' into my own interpretive voice.

Finally, without wanting to downplay the advantages of my relationships with the CEOs, Skye and I took the decision to employ a parallel analysis of the voices to ensure that I wasn't compromising the hermeneutic spiral. This discussion will be explained in detail in *Appendix C – Methodology Supplement*.

2.4.8. Self reflection through journal writing and 'reflexivity martyrs'

> Reflexive discourses and discursive practices transform the processes of analytical and critical bracketing...[in which researchers demonstrate] to their audiences their historical and geographic situatedness, their personal investments in the research, various biases they bring to the work, their surprises and 'undoings' in the process of the research endeavour, the ways in which their choices of literary tropes lend rhetorical force to the research report, and/or the ways in which they have avoided or suppressed certain points of view (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:1027).

Denzin and Lincoln provide several institutionalised practices for seeking reflexivity in interpretive studies. As a reflexive interpreter, I adopted the practice of maintaining a' reflexivity journal', in which I continually documented notes and impressions of how my biases, history and personal outlook may be impacting upon the research process. I also recorded a running commentary of conversations that I had with Richard and Skye, who in a way were my 'reflexivity martyrs', challenging the notions upon which my interpretations were based at every point.

The journal enabled me to capture my thoughts as they occurred, and thus build them into my dialogue in the forthcoming sections of this chapter. It is for this reason that the methodology, and in fact the entire thesis, takes on a narrative style written in first person so that the reader may themselves judge how I fare across each of Denzin and Lincoln's claims. I have taken careful attention to bring to the fore each conversation, decision point, insight and learning as it occurred at various points of the research.

With the above principles in mind, I have provided a detailed explanation of the data gathering and interpretive phases of my research in *Appendix C – Methodology Supplement*, including excerpts from my reflexivity journal, and significant detail on my outputs and learnings from each phase. This appendix is particularly for the academic audience in order to demonstrate my reflexivity openly. As a word of warning, the appendix contains content-related material that pertains to the emergent themes which has the potential to 'spoil' the first reading of the narratives. Ideally, I would discourage the reader from reading this appendix until after a first reading of the forthcoming narratives, and address it later if further explanation is desired.

For readers who want to get straight to the narratives, I have inserted here a 'snapshot' or pictorial summary of the phases that took place between data gathering and construction of the narratives, with short descriptions and references to sections of the detailed appendix (see Figure 7 below).

DATA COLLECTION PHASE 1 (Appendix C – Section 3.1)

Uncovering the 'Peter Fuda' Horizon
- Richard interview Peter to get 'horizon' and potential bias on record
- Disclose 'horizon' in *The Peter Fuda Story*

CEO Interview 1
- Create interview setting
- Unstructured, exploratory interviews with each CEO; what motivated the CEO's to shift their impact', and how did they do it?
- Reflect in journal

Direct Report (DR) Interviews
- Select/ brief DRs
- DRs read CEO interview transcripts
- Semi structured interviews to validate and extend CEO insights
- Reflect in journal

Account Director (AD)Interviews
- Brief ADs
- ADs read CEO interview transcripts
- Semi structured interviews to validate and extend CEO insights
- Reflect in journal

OUTPUT

29 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPS

DATA INTERPRETATION PHASE 1 (Appendix C – Section 3.2)

Interpretive Analysis (Peter)
- Identify broad concepts (manual)
- Narrow, refine merge
- Assign 'categories of meaning to capture intent of what was said

Leximancer Analysis (Skye)
- Identify broad concepts (automatic)
- Narrow, refine, merge
- Create evidence log for each concept

Collaboration
- Bring interpretive and Leximancer analyses together
- Combine, build, extend themes
- Develop theme descriptions

OUTPUT

ARRIVE AT 'FINAL' THEMES, FOR NOW

REFINE / EXPAND THEMES (Appendix C – Section 3.3)

(Re)immersion in transcripts (Peter)
- Consider how each CEO lived each of the emergent themes
- Place notes in a CEO/Theme matrix

Impose 'intellectual bureacracy' on themes (Skye)
- Consult practitioner-oriented and academic literature pertaining to themes
- Explore possible dimensions of themes

Themes vis-a-vis CEO interview
- Skye interview Peter regarding every part of the CEO/Theme matrix
- Skye probe Peter with regards to 'intellectual bureaucracy'

OUTPUT

ADVANCED UNDERSTANDING OF THEMES / TENTATIVE THEME 'DEFINITIONS'

DATA COLLECTION PHASE 2 (Appendix C – Section 3.4)

Develop probing points for CEO interview 2
- Points for exploration that were derived from the 'intellectual bureacracy' and 'themes vis-a-vis CEO interview'

CEO Interview 2
- Create interview setting
- Semi-structured (yet fluid) interview with each CEO to explore theme probe points in depth
- Reflect in journal

Gather additional primary data sources
- Personal observations/ experiences with CEOs
- Copies of coaching notes used in 1-1 interactions
- Personal emails from CEOs

Gather additional secondary data sources
- Leadership Impact reports for each CEO
- Presentations speaking engagements at HSI conferences / CEO forums (incl. video)

OUTPUT

7 NEW INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPS (36 TOTAL)

+ OTHER PRIMARY & SECONDARY DATA SOURCES

DATA PREPARATION FOR NARRATIVE CONSTRUCTION (Appendix C – Section 3.5)

Upload primary and secondary data into NVivo
- Upload primary and secondary data sources into NVivo

Code and label data
- Code data for each CEO into thematic 'buckets', L/I data 'buckets', or contextual 'buckets

Export NVivo data to Word
- Export data pertaining to each CEO into Microsoft Word in preparation for narrative construction

OUTPUT

PREPARED FOR NARRATIVE WRITING

Figure 7: Snapshot of the emergent methodology with references to Appendix C – Methodology Supplement

2.4.9. A snapshot of my Emergent Methodology

Data collection phase 1 comprised a round of exploratory, open ended and largely unstructured interviews. The first interview in the sequence was between Richard and I, targeting my own insights on the factor's leading to transformation for each of the seven CEOs. The purpose of this step was primarily to assist me in becoming aware of my own potential to bias the actors' insights in subsequent interviews, and secondly, to allow for my insights to be ultimately woven into the final narrative. More information on the purpose and outcomes of this phase are available in *Appendix C, section 3.1.1. Uncovering the 'Peter Fuda Horizon'*.

Next, I conducted the first of two in-depth interviews with each of the seven CEOs. This first round of interviews was also largely exploratory and unstructured, targeting the motivation and key factors contributing to transformation as perceived by the CEOs. Conscious to limit my own biases from tainting or leading the responses at this stage, I took a fairly detached stance which centred on gentle probing and limiting my involvement in discussion. More information on the interview setting, questions and interview techniques, and my reflections and learnings are available in *Appendix C, section 3.1.2. CEO Interview Round 1*.

Step three of data collection phase 1 involved me interviewing two executive team members from each of the CEOs' organisations (fourteen in total) who had directly witnessed and participated in the transformation journey of each respective CEO. Having read a transcription of their respective CEO's reflections, I asked each executive to comment on how their own recollections and insights were similar or different to those of their CEO. More information about the selection and briefing process, questions and interview techniques, and reflections and learnings from this phase of interviews are available in *Appendix C, section 3.1.3. Direct Report Interviews*.

Upon a suggestion from one of the CEOs, I decided that the perspectives from the Account Directors in my company who worked with each CEO on their organisational change agenda would allow us to gain an even richer picture of the experience. These interviews were carried out in a similar vein to the direct report interviews described above, and more information about the selection process, briefing, questions, and reflections from this phase of interviews are available in *Appendix C, section 3.1.4. Account Director Interviews*.

In *Data Interpretation Phase 1,* all 29 interview transcripts were analysed for the critical themes emerging on the key factors enabling transformation. Given my proximity to the CEOs and my inherent bias, Skye and I took independent yet simultaneous analyses of the transcripts. My analysis was a holistic, interpretive analysis of the texts largely guided by Max Van Manen's (1990) suggested guidelines for interpretive research. Skye's analysis of the texts was a more systematic, formally quantitative analysis using the text analytics software program *Leximancer* to draw out themes. Detailed information about our independent analyses, including the Van Manen (1990) interpretive guidelines, an overview of Leximancer, and the collaborative manner in which our themes emerged, is available in *Appendix C, section 3.2. Data Interpretation Phase 1*.

Armed with our preliminary themes, we undertook several processes in order to *Refine and Extend the Emerging Themes*, including bringing Richard into the hermeneutic spiral. Upon Richard's suggestion, Skye and I once again took independent roles to ensure we continued to bring reflexivity into our analysis. Skye took a literary orientation and consulted extant theory (both practitioner-oriented and academic) in order to expand our frame of reference as we explored each of our themes, whilst I re-immersed in the transcripts to consider how each CEO experience featured across each theme. With the literature in mind, Skye then conducted a *Themes vis-a-vis CEO interview* with me, asking probing questions around the CEO's experience relating to each of themes. Following this interview, Skye and I devised tentative theme 'definitions', or loose statements that described our understanding of the themes, and specific probing points that would be addressed in CEO interview 2. More information about the literature consulted, Skye and my interview around the themes, and the development of probe points for CEO interview 2 are available in *Appendix C, section 3.3. Refinement and Expansion of Emerging Themes.*

In *Data Collection Phase 2*, I tested and expanded our understanding of the themes with each of the CEOs via semi-structured in-depth interviews. During this phase, my involvement increased and I became an active participant in the development of an understanding around the themes, building upon the CEO responses with my own observations, experience and interpretations. I utilised deep probing in an effort to generate rich and colourful insights, stories and metaphors that I felt would benefit the narratives. More information about the interview process and techniques, my reflections and learnings are available in *Appendix C, section 3.4. Data Collection Phase 2.*

In *Data Preparation for Narrative Construction*, the decision was taken not to undergo a second round of interpretive and Leximancer analysis. Obviously I wanted to expand how our understanding of the emergent themes could be progressed from the most recent round of interviews, but I decided that at this point to commence writing the CEO narratives from all of the primary and secondary data sources, including (but not limited to) the transcripts from CEO interview round two. In this sense, the writing of the narratives would cause me to reflect on the emergent themes in a way that was far more grounded in context than another round of interpretive/ Leximancer analysis of the transcripts in isolation. In order to sort and manage my data, I filtered the interview transcripts, along with all other primary and secondary data sources, into thematic groupings using text analysis software *QSR NVivo*. More information on this process is available in *Appendix C, section 3.5. Data Preparation for Narrative Construction.*

In the following section, I return to a more detailed discussion of Czarniawska and others to outline the manner in which I crafted the narratives from the variety of inputs I had accumulated.

2.5. CRAFTING THE NARRATIVES

2.5.1. The challenge of 'emplotment'

> Narrative draws a meaningful story from a diversity of events or incidents... Furthermore, emplotment brings together factors as heterogeneous as agents, goals, means, interactions, circumstances, and unexpected results (Ricoeur, 1984:65).

In the quotation above, Ricoeur outlines the narrator's challenge of emplotment; crafting a meaningful narrative from an otherwise seemingly disparate array of pieces so that their temporal and logical interdependencies can be grasped. Those from the empirical school find this notion problematic, the fact that the plot must be 'put there' by me, with no way for the reader to tell apart fact from fiction. The author is in a position of power to shape the plot, in whatever way they see fit. I could, depending upon my skills as a writer, easily write my 'characters' as a piece of fiction, without my reader knowing the difference and would it indeed make any difference? Czarniawska argues that "there is no structural difference between fictional and factual narrative, and their respective attraction is not determined by their claims to be fact or fiction" (1998:5). Citing Bruner, she explains that narrative's indifference to extra linguistic reality is in fact its very strength;

> The perceived coherence of the sequence (temporal order) of events rather than truth or falsity of story elements determines the plot, and thus the power of the narrative as a story. (Czarniawska, 1998:5)

Again, there were no rules guiding the emplotment process, just guidelines, suggestions and common sense. Returning to Weick and his sense making stance, 'plausibility' is far more important than 'accuracy', the latter of which is inherently problematic in the minds of social constructionists.

> If accuracy is nice but not necessary in sense making, then what is necessary?...something that preserves plausibility and coherence, something that is reasonable and memorable...something that resonates with other people, something that can be constructed retrospectively but can also be used prospectively, something that allows for embellishment to fit current oddities, something that is fun to contrast. In short, what is necessary in sense making is a good story (Weick, 1995: 60-61).

Following the works of Bakhtin and Ricoeur, there were several measures taken in order to address my inherent power in the emplotment process thoughtfully and reflexively. Bakhtin (1986) brings attention to the relationship between the narrative work and the primary consciousness (my authorship of the work), in which each make claims on each other.

> The work and the author are intimately linked in the act of creativity... the work is the result of a plan, the realisation of that plan, and the interaction and struggle between these two (Bakhtin, 1986:104).

Not only is there an intended meaning in the narrative product in the expression of ideas, actions or stories, there is also intention in the act of communicating that message; to speak and be heard, to connect to others, to gain recognition from others, and to come to some recognition of the intentions of others. The work is always the result of some purpose, and is not possible without its author. Thus to deny authorship of a work, and the circumstances of its production, is to deny the purpose of the work - to communicate. By nature, the very act of communication assumes dialogical process, and thus Ricoeur finds of fictional stories that the composition of a narrative work "…is not completed in the text but in

the reader…[or] more precisely; the sense or the significance of a narrative stems from the intersection of the world of the text and the world of the reader" (1991: 26). In this respect, my two audiences are crucial to the 'sense' and 'significance' of the CEO narratives, and I am in fact 'speaking to them' through my work.

Accepting the view of 'narrative as a mode of communication' means incorporating the purpose of the author, the conditions under which the narratives are produced, and the character of the audiences that consume them. In this model, the intended and actual audiences play a central role in determining the worthiness of the work. A pre-requisite for 'worthiness' is for the audience to understand and trust the intention behind a work. Recently, Skye asked me why anyone should trust my motivation, and that I wasn't construing the narratives in a way that presents myself in a shining light and serves my own ego-related purposes. My answer to that was, through reading the narratives, my audience may judge this for themselves.

This judgement is informed not only by my own reflexive comments, but also the ongoing dialogue with Skye and Richard, and my own personal narrative, which is documented in this thesis. I hope the result is that the two audiences will see me as motivated by a quest for mutual learning. I hope they come to the conclusion that I do not profess to be a 'super change agent', nor do I believe such a thing exists. I am at least as human as each of the CEOs in the study, and I have tried to outline the struggles I faced along the way as openly and as honestly as possible. I am also driven by a feeling of obligation to the people who have taken part, each of whom I respect and admire greatly, each of whom I believe I have learnt off as much as they have learnt of me, and all of whom I consider personal friends. It is therefore my desire to represent the subjects of this study in a way that I feel is authentic and respectful to their experience, while acknowledging that my interpretations and purposes are inevitably involved in the narration.

My drive for authenticity and respect has had implications for the manner in which have I structured the seven CEO narratives. I chose not to segment the narratives thematically for several reasons. Firstly, the narratives themselves are intended to be more than merely 'data' illustrative of general themes. It is my intention that they represent important and potentially influential narratives in their own right, standing as a valuable contribution to theory and practice. I wanted the CEO narratives themselves to be at the heart of the thesis so that 'the authors of the utterance are put on stage' as Ricoeur (1992:48) puts it. I wished them to stand as stimulating reflexive accounts of the lives of leaders, stories that might interest, inform, amuse, move or provoke the reader. Secondly, I felt that the themes drawn out from the narratives, if given priority of place, imposed arbitrary boundaries around the complex phenomenon that I had witnessed unfold. Instead, it was my desire to weave a story around a narrative triad of transformational (i) life-history and experiences, (ii) key events and contexts, and (iii) central themes. My discussion of themes or lessons learnt therefore sits in a subsequent chapter behind the seven CEO narratives.

2.5.2. Ordering the pieces

Czarniawska refers to a field research report as a collage; "a compilation of texts authored by practitioners, theoreticians and subjects themselves" (1998:66). She then goes on to note that in the traditional, positivist school of thought, "research reports were always collages, but work and skill goes into 'softening the edges, in erasing the different authorships, in achieving the illusion of telling one story" (1998:67). Using the metaphor of the collage, a constructionist researcher is encouraged to make the report more clearly polyphonic and attribute authorships to different voices. Bakhtin refers to this as 'variegated speech', wherein a writer intentionally intersperses his or her work with traces of different dialects, vocabularies and voices, rather than homogenising them into one scientific text (1985). This does not, however, reduce the researcher's role to a passive collator of voices. Rather, the work of the researcher is to draw out, tie together, reconceptualise and enrich the meaning, or understanding of the phenomenon (Czarniawska, 1998). Essentially, this is the value that I hope to add through the narrative sense making approach adopted in this thesis.

This was something that I kept at the top of my mind as I considered how to weave a thread between the different voices that I had 'collected' within each narrative. My first attempt at ordering the pieces was in the construction of the first narrative, which was of Tim. I started with Tim's narrative for practical purposes; he had recently moved to New York and I was heading over there a couple of months after I had begun the writing process. I thought it would be good to review his completed narrative with him in person and receive any feedback directly. I literally cut out the themes that I had drawn out through the text management software, laid them out on a large boardroom table, and began moving the pieces around until I could make sense of them in terms of a story. Then, I started writing, trying to weave a narrative between the pieces.

> As Bakhtin suggests of any relations - any study of the ordering of parts into a whole, or any architectonics - the relations between the narrative work and narrative consciousnesses are "…never static, but always in the process of being made or unmade" (in Holquist, 1991:29).

I really felt the essence of Bakhtin's statement. My first attempt at plotting a narrative was a painful, lengthy process, but I ended up with a 'straw man' which I sent to Skye. We ended up deconstructing most of the narrative, and developing a more systematic and thoughtful approach.

The subsequent approach involved plotting the 'thread' of each narrative, as though it were a worm depicting swings of 'ups' and 'downs' in each journey. Within the swings, I was able to layer events, quotes and observations meaningfully from my collage. The plotting exercise may seem like I was arbitrarily trying to build drama and transition into the stories. While it was indeed my objective to make the stories enjoyable as well as informative, the 'worm' exercise was insightful in and of itself. I found that most of the stories comprised dramatic swings between up and down during the early phases of the journey, and then in the latter stages the worm stabilised to a gentler trajectory/slope. Some did not seem to follow this pattern, however.

Jim had placed such an empowering meaning over all of his recollections, everything was described as an 'up', even events that I remembered as being particularly challenging at the time. This was in my opinion a key finding; Jim's ability to place an empowering meaning over dramatic events was a testament to his spiritual approach to leadership. Alan, being a coach himself by the time I began the study, was also placing a positive lens over events that he once described as dramatic to me. In my subsequent interview with each of them, I asked them to place themselves back in the moment in which the dramatic events occurred, and recall how they felt at the time. Dennis and Clynton's 'worms' were more gentle trajectories; it was not that their stories were without drama, but they seemed to have less emotive ways of dealing with the drama and better coping mechanisms.

2.5.3. An arbitrary beginning and end

Czarniawska (1998) advocates that narratives generally comprise three states, (i) an original stage, (ii) an action or event, and (ii) a consequent state. Certainly I had a clear before and after picture of the original and consequent states through the Leadership/Impact measures. As I proceeded through the data collection and interpretation phases, I came to see these measures not as the bookends to the story, but more as key milestones within a journey that commenced before the first measure, and continued after the final measure. However, I did have to pick an arbitrary start and end point, so I loosely structured the narratives around the time my company was professionally engaged by the respective CEOs. In cases where I felt a CEO's journeys commenced before my involvement with them, I have relied on evidence from others to supplement parts of the story. This is most true for Jim who started a journey of leadership transformation some time before I met him.

The arbitrary bookends I have used are addressed in the Prologue and Epilogue for each CEO narrative. In the Prologue, I utilise the CEOs' own words describing a 'story type' (for example; comedy, fairytale) that they felt best describes their overall leadership transformation journey, not restricted to the period of our engagement. This is designed to give the reader a context and flavour for the story to come. The Epilogue is a concluding note written from a very recent point in time, designed to give the reader my sense for what has taken place in the respective CEO's life *after* the narrative concludes.

2.5.4. Chronology to a point

In narrative, chronology is a typical strategy for drawing disparate parts into a meaningful whole. Czarniawska outlines how chronology "in the mind of the reader easily turns into causality (a result of, in spite of')" (1998:2). At least in any simple sense, this is not my intention here. Chronology was a starting point in my construction of the narratives, but I don't refrain from looking back into the CEOs' pasts in order to explain or interpret aspects of the journey that were occurring at a different point in time. I also took the decision to cluster some things together in order to aid sense making and coherence, even if they were not strictly chronological. Consequently, rather than adhering to a strict chronological timeline, I draw upon the metaphor of scenes to divide up sections of each narrative. Each scene contains one or more incidents or ideas that I consider to be a discreet chunk of the journey. As with movie footage, a

scene may include a flash back to the past, or a voice over in the narrator's voice in order to convey meaning of the 'present'; that is, the present at the point in time of the story.

2.5.5. <u>Voices</u>

Being explicit about the 'voices in time' and 'point in time' became of critical importance in terms of my efforts at sense making and reflexivity. Effectively, each of the narratives is told in my own voice, that is, they represent my own narrative account of the seven journeys. The other voices in the story are 'heard' through my own voice. While adopting this approach, and making clear my active involvement in the construction of the narratives, it was also my intention, as much as possible, to raise the different voices to the fore and be explicit as to which voice is occurring at which point in time, rather than smooth the voices into my own reflective voice.

I realised, moreover, that I actually have several 'voices' myself, and decided to list them out along with some typical pre-fixes that would help me denote to the reader which voice in time I was using. Figure 8 lists out three voices in time that I attempted to distinguish in the narratives, and some typical sentence pre-fixes that I utilised accordingly.

Voice	Typical sentence pre-fixes
Peter as a participant, in the moment. Putting myself back 'in' the moment described, describing my own account of events, as a participant in the journey of the CEO and also undergoing my own journey of development	▪ I experienced…. ▪ I met…. ▪ I felt…. ▪ I went…. ▪ I did….
Peter as a change agent, in the moment. My reflections, as a change agent, observing and interpreting the CEO's journey at the time	▪ My observation then, at the time, was…. ▪ My reaction at the time was…. ▪ My sense at the time was…
Peter as a researcher in the present reflecting on his change agent experiences. My reflections and learnings, now, with the benefit of experience, hindsight and multiple sources of input from the research project	▪ In retrospect…. ▪ With the benefit of hindsight… ▪ Having experienced this many times since, I now believe… ▪ After many discussions with XX we have come to a new understanding…

Figure 8: Narrative Voices

The CEO, Direct Report and Account Director voices were easier to represent through the function of indented quotes. However, within each narrative, I was conscious to make it clear to the reader whether the quotes were representative of how the subjects felt at the time, or whether they were recent reflections, looking backward with the benefit of hindsight.

2.5.6. Style

Narratives may be seen as either the author seeking to educate the reader through though their own interpretation, or leaving the reader to assign their own meaning to the work (Czarniawska, 1998). My intention is to fall somewhere in the middle of what I consider two artificial extremes. In the case of the narratives, I wish very much for the reader to take out what is important to them, and acknowledge that what is 'important' is influenced by their subjectivity, and I suspect this will differ quite a lot between my two defined audiences. That said the narratives are coloured by my interpretation of events throughout, although I have tried very hard to position my interpretation in the form of observations, perceptions and learnings, as opposed to judgement, critique and statements of fact. Skye played a critical role in exercising this intent with what we came to know as the 'J' versus 'P' exercise; labels which we derived from the Myers Briggs Type Indicator of 'judger' and 'perceiver' (e.g. Myers, 1990). Every time a statement of judgement crept in to my writing, Skye would mark the section with a large 'J', and this would force me to consider where I derived this opinion from. This also helped me to realise where I was drifting away from the social constructionist mindset of more open reflective interpretation, albeit from someone who 'was there'.

Czarniawska refers to the latter challenge as the realist's dilemma, often referred to as a justifiable naive realism; 'creating the impression of having been there' (1998:72). While this sounds counter-intuitive to social constructionist views, Czarniawska goes on to state that realism is not dead in narrative post modern literature at all, rather, it is 'a way of depicting and describing the situation in a faithful, life like manner' (1998:72). Again, what is faithful, and what is lifelike are also matters of subjective interpretation. In many situations, I *was* actually *there*, that is, in the midst of the story I am telling, but at other points, I was less so or totally absent. I have been very careful in my realist prose to distinguish the basis from which my claims are laid, whether it was an observation at the time, or something that I discovered through conversation, an educated guess or at times a blind stab in the dark. By making the grounding of my own reading more explicit, I hope to assist my readers in coming to their own judgements regarding the plausibility of my voice and interpretation.

2.5.7. Resonance of the narratives

> All research must respond to canons that stand as criteria against which the trustworthiness of the project can be evaluated (Marshall & Rossman, 1995:142).

Qualitative research writers Marshall and Rossman outline the challenge of establishing the worthiness of a piece of research, which in the positive and empirical traditions has meant outlining how a piece of work conforms to validity and reliability standards. The notion of validity, which is synonymous with a 'correspondence' view of truth, is absurd within the social constructionist perspective and illogical in terms of the objectives of this work. Similarly, I do not aspire to strict standards or 'canons' of reliability, which is generally synonymous with 'replicability', given that my research work unfolded out of a culmination of my unique social history and beliefs, and my access to data and CEO relationships. I am, of course, far from alone in my critique of positivist criteria for 'good' scientific research. Numerous authors have suggested alternative means for establishing worthiness in various genres of interpretive works, although

many of these have ended up reproducing positivist notions of degrees of truth, applicability, consistency or authenticity in a work (Czarniawska, 1998).

Following my earlier discussions around the notions of subjective perception, involvement of the reader in sense making, and my emphasis on a hermeneutic spiral, it is most likely of no surprise that the evaluative criterion I am employing draws on reader-response theory. This theory effectively recognises the reader as an active agent who imparts 'real existence' to the work and completes its meaning through interpretation. Here, I draw on the philosophical works of Wolfgang Iser, Jean Paul Sartre and, Richard Rorty to justify this stance.

A fundamental assumption of reader-response theory is that meaning emerges via an interaction between the text, reader and culture.

> The significance of the work...does not lie in the meaning sealed within the text, but in the fact that the meaning brings out what had been previously sealed within us...Through gestalt-forming, we actually participate in the text, and this means that we are caught up in the very thing we are producing. This is why we often have the impression, as we read, that we are living another life (Iser, 1974:157)

This stands in stark contrast to theories of formalism and the New Criticism, in which the reader's role in re-creating literary works is ignored. As proclaimed by Sartre:

> The reader is left with everything to do, yet everything has already been done; the work only exists precisely on the level of ...[the reader's] abilities; while he reads and creates, he knows that he could always create more profoundly; and this is why the work appears to him as inexhaustible and as impenetrable as an object (Sartre, 1949:167).

Czarniawska invokes the works of Richard Rorty to provide a supportive pragmatist theory of reading and giving preference to performative criteria; "that summarise the typical justifications given when a positive reception occurs...[for example] something works because it touches me, because it is beautiful, because it is a powerful metaphor" (Czarniawska, 1998:70-71). In my case, I established two criterions from which I wished my work to be judged by my two audiences, the first of which was '*is it interesting, does it move people?*' In this respect, Rorty advocates that to 'move' someone involves an *edifying discourse*, that is, a discourse that has the power to "take us out of our old selves by the power of strangeness, to aid us in becoming new beings" (1992 in Czarniawska, 1998:70). The second criterion I set was '*is it informative?*' That is, is my work seen to be of practical value by my audiences, particularly the management practitioner?

Again, the responses to such questions on the part of audiences are highly subjective. There were, however, questions that I asked at multiple phases of the research from multiple stakeholders. Obviously, a key audience in determining the initial resonance of the narratives was the CEOs themselves. At the conclusion of the drafting of each narrative, I asked each CEO to comment on their 'story', and I was personally very humbled to hear their responses. Without giving away their words here, I have instead included their verbatim comments at the end of each CEO narrative for the audience to hear directly. As

previously noted in my discussion of my hermeneutic spiral, the testing of resonance occurred at multiple levels beyond the walls of my organisation and the CEOs themselves.

Multiple audiences heard and responded to my 'work in progress' at various forums. Importantly, this was not merely a static process of asking for judgement on the finished works. Rather, my testing of resonance involved eliciting feedback on selected iterations of my narratives and the themes that the work progressed. *Appendix E – Resonance with Management Practitioners* outlines the responses that I collected from selected forums over the past 12 months. *Appendix F – DVD of CEO Presentations* not only shows four of the CEOs in this study and myself live on stage talking about our experiences, but also allows the viewer to hear audience reactions to our articulation of this study in its formative stages (a physical copy of this DVD is included with this document pack).

Having laid out my methodological approach to this study in some detail, it is now time for you as the reader to judge the resonance of the seven CEO narratives that comprise the heart of this study.

3. CHAPTER 3: NARRATIVES

3.1. SUBJECT SELECTION JUSTIFICATION

3.1.1. <u>Alan McGilvray</u>
<u>CEO, Bayer Australia and New Zealand (Bayer ANZ)</u>

From the perspective of successful leadership transformation, Alan is a worthy subject of study, indicated by his measurable shift in Leadership/Impact® (Cooke, 1997) from predominantly Aggressive -Defensive to predominantly Constructive, in a period of just over two years. For me, this shift was made more significant because it was achieved largely within the context of a very traditional, change resistant, and sometimes hostile German multinational. The shift in Alan's own data is mirrored and advanced in other Human Synergistics measurements undertaken in the organisation since 2003 targeting senior management, middle management and the broader culture with the tools Leadership/Impact, Life Styles Inventory™ (Lafferty, 1973) and Organisational Culture Inventory® (Cooke & Lafferty, 1987).

In addition to Human Synergistics data, there are numerous other data points which suggest that Alan created success and left a powerful legacy during his three year tenure as CEO. In 2001, Bayer ANZ achieved its profit result despite the worldwide recall of the drug "Lipobay" (which decimated the global profit results for the corporate parent - Bayer AG), effectively adding $5 Million Euro to the bottom line. In 2002, Bayer ANZ exceeded its profit target by more than 50% and continued this momentum into 2003 where the profit target was once again exceeded.

Staff surveys in 2002 showed unprecedented commitment to the culture change process and to personal behaviour change, with both statistics topping 94%. In 2002, Bayer AG recognised the local change process in its Global Annual Report. But perhaps the surest sign of success is that Bayer achieved the prestigious Hewitt Top 10 Employer of Choice Award in 2005; only four years after it was positioned in the bottom 10% of the Hewitt data base for employee engagement.

The transformation of Bayer ANZ has made Alan somewhat of a celebrity and he has completed countless speaking engagements and media appearances since 2003 including Channel 10's Evening News, the ABC's Business Breakfast, The Financial Review, Sky Business Report, The International CEO Forum, and the keynote address at the 5th Australian Conference on Leadership and Culture..

On a personal note, Alan is important for this study because in the nine years I have known him, I have always experienced him as an emotive, self-effacing, heart on the sleeve kind of human being. I think his very honest and humble approach to his leadership journey, and my telling of it, present the management practitioner with a very human and accessible story.

Finally, Alan was my first serious leadership client and much of what I practice today is based on learnings from his journey. Writing Alan's narrative forced me to revisit my first clumsy steps as a change agent and I hope these will prove instructive to the reader.

3.1.2. Mike Shove
CEO and President, CSC Australia

Mike Shove's story represents a journey of transformation from every conceivable angle and data point. His own Leadership/Impact data began in 2003 with the single worst measure I had (and have) ever seen, progressed to more of a mixed impact in 2005, and concluded with one of the most Constructive profiles I have ever seen in early 2008. The re-measure of CSC's organisational culture during this period demonstrated positive shifts toward Constructive norms in ten of twelve styles and thirty-one of thirty two leading indicators. Similarly, the re-measure of Mike's executive team evidenced shifts toward Constructive norms in eleven of twelve styles.

For four consecutive years, CSC Australia exceeded market growth, achieved compound double digit profit and revenue growth, and met all corporate targets winning Mike four consecutive 'Eagle Awards'; the highest internal accolade in CSC globally (incidentally, he has won two more Eagle Awards since moving up to run Asia, making it six in a row). All twelve of CSC's major client accounts became 'referenceable' during Mike's tenure, such that these client accounts would act as a reference for CSC in their pursuit of new clients. CSC's focus on a customer intimacy strategy was recognised by the International Customer Services Professionals Association for excellence in customer service.

The four vacancies in the executive team between 2005 - 2007 were each filled with internal candidates and in 2006, CSC's people practices where recognised at the Australian Human Resources Industry Awards (AHRI) where they achieved national recognition for excellence in people management. The transformation process in Australia was deemed so successful that my company now works with the global CSC organisation across North America, Europe and Asia, as well as continuing work with CSC Australia.

Like Alan, Mike remains in hot demand in the media and for public speaking engagements all around the world. In fact, he was a keynote speaker at both the 9th and 11th Australian Conference on Leadership and Culture; the only CEO to present twice in this very prestigious forum. The most common reaction from people who knew Mike in the early days is that the "cannot believe it's the same individual; he is a man transformed".

On a personal note, Mike has been my longest single client so our stories are very much intertwined. I feel privileged to be able to tell such a powerful, sustained and compelling story of leadership transformation.

3.1.3. Jim Varghese
Director General
QLD Department of Education, then QLD Department of
Employment & Training, then QLD Department
of Primary Industries

From a Human Synergistics data perspective, Jim has a story stretching back to 1991 when he reluctantly undertook his first Life Styles Inventory measure. Despite our collective best efforts, neither a hard or soft copy of this Life Styles Inventory exists today though three people, including Jim, have described it very clearly to me; 'a complete sea of red' (Aggressive/ Defensive styles). His 2000 Life Styles Inventory measure had more 'blue' than the first but it still tells a story of a //manager operating extremely aggressively. By contrast, his Leadership/Impact measures in 2006 and 2008 show a predominantly Constructive leader with his 2008 measure showing almost twice as much blue as red.

Jim's ability to further increase his Constructive impact from 2006 to 2008 is a remarkable achievement in my opinion. Not only was he leading a huge and unpopular transformation of a very traditional department in the Queensland Government; the Department of Primary Industries (DPI), but he had spent much of this period managing two of the most devastating crises to hit Queensland; Hurricane Larry and Equine Influenza. In my mind, if ever he was to revert to his authoritarian origins learned in the Victorian public service some years earlier, then this would have been the time. Yet Jim rose to the occasion in the most admirable way.

The Leadership/Impact data for Jim's team and their direct report (top 80 managers) has revealed significant Constructive increases across all major dimensions; a very significant achievement within the context of a difficult reform agenda. Importantly, this data has increased even after Jim's departure from DPI to the private sector. In fact, the manner in which I saw Jim handle his succession to his Deputy Director General was in my opinion a model of Constructive leadership.

The anecdotal feedback on Jim's transformation over this period is very strong. I am fortunate enough to have developed close professional relationships with two of Jim's long term former employees who both described the Jim of the 1990s as 'a toe cutter of the first order'. The Jim I know today could not be further removed from this image; he continues to be the most spiritually interested and aware CEO that I have ever worked with.

Jim's results at DPI were very impressive. In annual reports submitted to Parliament, the assessment of Jim's performance by the then Premier Peter Beatty, against a balanced scorecard, ensured Jim received the maximum performance bonus of 15% of salary. He was told by Premier Beatty that he was the best 'change manager' in government. In fact, the work we did with Jim at DPI was nominated for a prestigious Premier's Award for Excellence.

Finally, Jim's nomination and subsequent award of the Order of Australia for services to government speaks volumes about his leadership contribution in the state of Queensland.

3.1.4. Clynton Bartholomeusz
Managing Director (MD),
Beiersdorf Australia and New Zealand

Clynton's leadership transformation and shift in data toward Constructive norms is enormous and his last measure in late 2009 was an almost 'perfect' Constructive profile; measured by the Leadership/Impact tool as between 90 and 99 percent for each of the blue leadership styles and no red or green data to speak of at all. Clynton's Executive Team has individually and collectively achieved very big shifts toward Constructive norms over three measures of Leadership/Impact, as have the Leadership Team (the 30 direct reports of Clynton's executive team). In passing, it is worth mentioning that Clynton also holds the record for the most number of Leadership/Impact measures in this research study (four); probably the most measures of any CEO in the Australian data base.

There are numerous other measures of success which make Clynton a worthy subject of study. The total number of Beiersdorf brands achieving the number one or number two spot in their categories has increased from eight brands out of thirteen in 2004 to all thirteen by 2009. More importantly, Beiersdorf's brand growth has significantly outperformed the market despite the size and marketing spend of much larger competitors.

An academically rigorous survey conducted by Macquarie University revealed overall employee engagement levels at the 94th percentile; effectively placing Beiersdorf ahead of 93% of all companies in the database.

Externally, Beiersdorf has been recognised with a number of prestigious awards, including Best HR team (2005) and Best Employer Branding strategy (2006) at the Australian Human Resources Industry Awards (AHRI). Additionally, an external benchmarking study revealed significant growth across a number of key internal processes compared to Australian best practices.

Like several of the other CEOs in this study, Clynton's success had brought him notoriety in the Australian business community. He has spoken at the CEO Forum on three separate occasions about his journey and was a key note speaker at the 11th Australian Conference on Leadership and Culture. He has also appeared many times on the Sky Business Report, and been interviewed for a number of business publications.

3.1.5. Tim Castree

Managing Director (MD)
George Patterson Partners (GPP) Sydney, then
CEO Leo Burnett Australia

From a Human Synergistics point of view, Tim's Leadership/Impact data was not as transformative as the other CEOs in this study during the period covered by the thesis interviews, though it has changed since then. His original remeasure did demonstrate the shift from a predominantly Aggressive-Defensive impact to one which is predominantly Constructive, but there was still a good dose of red and green impact. As the months and years passed from his measure in early 2006, I suspected that Tim's impact was increasingly constructive based on the feedback I was receiving from his colleagues, my observation of him as a leader in action, and the results he was getting across a number of dimensions. In 2010, my suspicion was confirmed when Tim measured his Leadership/Impact for a third time achieving a huge Constructive shift in his impact.

I have also included Tim in the study because he is considerably younger than almost all of the other CEOs in the sample having begun his journey in his mid thirties. He is the only CEO in the sample to have his Leadership/Impact measured in different organisations; three in all. Tim also has a humility which made his story very compelling. In his own mind, he has made a journey from 'white belt to yellow belt' and I thought the imperfections in the early part of his journey would be very accessible to the management practitioner.

Under Tim's stewardship, his first organisation George Patterson Partners (GPP) in Sydney increased profit in the very difficult context of a private equity environment. At Leo Burnett, Tim's first year as CEO coincided with the first time the organisation had made a profit in six years. He went on to lead the organisation to significant revenue and profit growth in subsequent years.

Perhaps his greatest achievements were in the area of Leo Burnett's creative practices. In 2006, Leo Burnett was awarded Advertising Agency of the Year. In 2007, Tim was one of three founding Directors of the Earth Hour initiative which inspired 2.5 million Australians to turn their lights off in a show of support for climate change. In 2010, that number had reached 1.5 billion people around the world. In recognition of the Earth Hour initiative, Leo Burnett Australia was awarded the Titanium Award at the 2007 Cannes Advertising Awards; the most prestigious advertising award in the world.

Personally, Tim undertook a physical transformation during his leadership journey shedding a significant amount of weight and improving his health and fitness considerably through disciplined exercise and yoga. He also reconnected with his faith and invested heavily in spiritual learning. In short, he underwent a completely transformative experience.

Tim's career trajectory has followed his leadership transformation. He is now the Executive Vice President and Managing Director for MediaVest, one of the world's largest media companies, based in New York.

When I met his boss in Chicago recently, a lady who is considered by many to be a legend of the global media industry, she told me unprompted that Tim is 'an exceptional talent and a born leader'.

3.1.6. Paul Timmins
Managing Director (MD)
Getronics Australia

With regard to Paul's Leadership/Impact data, he is somewhat unique among this sample of seven CEOs. His first Leadership/Impact measure is quite balanced and the Constructive cluster is a little more pronounced than his Aggressive/ Defensive cluster. Paul's second Leadership/Impact measure two years later, however, is a 'sea of blue' and six of his eight Defensive styles are nonexistent. The very big shifts in Paul's own data during this period are mirrored by his executive team's data and also big shifts in the culture data.

Aside from the big shifts in Human Synergistics data, I included Paul also because of the profound shift in mindset he underwent; from a very controlling and autocratic disposition to one which was far more inclusive, open and collaborative. This shift in mindset is articulated at length by Paul in his narrative, and verified by his colleagues who were interviewed for this research study.

During the period of Paul's transformation journey Getronics Australia improved its performance on all critical dimensions. Being a finance guy, Paul is most proud of the fact that Getronics was able to arrest and reverse a serious downward slide in financial performance under his stewardship, and profitability has increased substantially ever since. Staff satisfaction and motivation increased over this period as measured by staff surveys. Customer satisfaction survey scores increased, and new customers were acquired in a highly competitive market. In fact, Paul incorporated the Getronics culture change journey into all new business pitches as a competitive point of differentiation. Not only did this help to increase new business win-rates, but it also opened up an unlikely new revenue stream. Some clients were so impressed with the Getronics leadership and culture journey, that they asked the Getronics Human Resources team to lead them through a similar journey as paid external consultants.

There is also one other unique factor that makes Paul's journey worthy of study. The journey toward Constructive leadership and culture has sustained itself to this day; almost four years since we ended our commercial partnership and two years since the departure of Ivan, Getronics head of Human Resources who led the change effort after our departure. It has also survived the ownership change from a subsidiary of a large Dutch multinational company, to an operating unit of a publicly listed Australian company. It would seem that Constructive norms are well and truly embedded in Getronics.

Not surprisingly, Paul is a sought after speaker and has spoken about his leadership journey to the CEO Forum and CEO Circle, among many other groups. He was also a key note speaker at the 11th Australian Conference on Leadership and Culture.

3.1.7. Dennis Fox
CEO, Asteron (Promina Group)

Dennis is a worthy subject of study for several reasons. Like the other CEOs in this study, Dennis' Leadership/Impact data shows a fairly dramatic shift from a predominantly Aggressive-Defensive impact to one which is dominated by a very Constructive Impact. But unlike the others, he achieved this shift in only 13 months; by far the shortest timeframe of all the CEOs in the sample. The fact that Dennis was the oldest of the seven CEOs to begin his journey by several years compounds the interest for me, and hopefully the reader. I suspect that Dennis was helped in achieving his transformation, against some pretty big odds, because he was the last subject in the sample to begin his journey and, therefore, benefitted from everything my colleagues and I had learned on all of the CEO journeys before his. Dennis' executive team also increased their Leadership/Impact Constructive scores in a 2008 remeasure.

Like the other CEOs, we can point to a number of other data points that suggest a strong success story for Dennis. Under his stewardship, Asteron experienced a 21% increase in operating profit, 50% growth in NZ sales performance, enhanced speed-to-market of core products, and substantial improvement in the quality and effectiveness of Human Resources.

Employee Surveys showed considerable improvement in staff engagement since 2005 when Dennis began his leadership journey, scoring over 80% in 2007, and placing Asteron well above industry norms. In addition, more than 80% of employees responded that they understood how they directly contributed to their respective team's goals and objectives; this score was up dramatically from previous surveys.

Data aside, I think Dennis' story is worthy of study because, in his own words, 'it shows that old dogs can learn new tricks'.

3.2. NARRATIVE – ALAN MCGILVRAY

3.2.1. Prologue

If I was to choose a story-type for my journey, it would be drama, with a twist of comedy perhaps. Yeah, in my case there was quite a bit of drama in there – and human conflict I would say. I was in a situation where I had worked for a company for 25 years which was dominated by a very aggressive, power-centric, and to be frank, bullying culture. I did what I needed to do to fit in and climb to the top of the corporate ladder, and with the top job in Australia and New Zealand I inherited the challenge of debuilding the Prussian Empire. But as I embarked on the journey I found out that growing up in this environment had taken its toll on my own Leadership/Impact; which was awful at the start. I then dedicated my life basically to moving the company forward by building a culture of Constructive *leadership, and wrapped in this was a very confronting leadership journey of my own. But then I ran into a human conflict wall. Head office was trying to demean what I was doing, trying to demean the partners I was working with, trying to bring a very unsavoury taste to the whole situation. It became an untenable situation for me to actually fight. I tried; I think 'fight' is probably the wrong word, I think 'oppose' is probably the right word. Because they were hell bent on rubbishing the whole thing. But I resisted, and to their embarrassment, Bayer ANZ Healthcare went on to be awarded with the Top Ten Employer of Australia award based on the work we were doing locally. Head quarters probably had a bit of egg on their chin, so in that sense I think the drama has a bit of a comedic ending to it. They probably did not see it that way.*

3.2.2. <u>The Empire strikes</u>

> I see that you successfully got past the Rottweilers. It's really embarrassing and something that we need to fix quickly.

These were the very first words that Alan McGilvray ever spoke to me. He said them over a warm handshake when we met for the first time in April 2001, four months after he assumed the role of CEO at Bayer Australia and New Zealand (ANZ). Bayer ANZ is a subsidiary of the German multinational Bayer AG, which is famous for non-prescription medication such as Aspro Clear, Berocca and Alka Seltzer, but is also diversified into businesses as varied as crop science, animal health and plastics.

Alan and I were introduced by a mutual business acquaintance, Richard, whom Bayer used for their public relations work. Alan had told Richard about the challenges he was facing as the new CEO and Richard referred him to me. In his referral, Richard also gave Alan a reprint of an article from The Bulletin Magazine which talked about the large scale employee engagement process I had run at Westpac. The article featured a big photo of Westpac's CEO Dr David Morgan, next to a bunch of quotes from me. Based on Richard's referral I was now apparently 'one of Australia's leading experts in leadership' and 'in hot demand by CEOs across the country'. The only challenge with Richard's generous referral was that, being in the PR game, he was a little prone to overstatement and exaggeration. I was only thirty years old at the time and out on my own for a grand total of nine months. I had not done any systematic work in leadership or culture, nor did I have a single long-term client. Being a hungry consultant at the time, I was very grateful for the referral and spent many hours preparing.

The meeting took place at Bayer's Sydney head office, and it was very instructive. I had always assumed that Bayer was headquartered in North Sydney because of the prominent Bayer sign on one of the nice buildings as you cross the bridge. Unfortunately, I soon found out that the sign was for show only; the actual office was another 35 minutes up the Pacific Highway in the business Mecca of Pymble. As I arrived at the car park, I was greeted by a gruff looking security guard who directed me to my car space which was signposted with two very prominent signs; both in capitals. The first read 'THIS SPOT IS RESERVED FOR BAYER – OFFENDING VEHICLES WILL BE TOWED AWAY AT YOUR EXPENSE.' As I wondered whether my vehicle was offending anyone, I noticed the second sign which read 'DO NOT REVERSE INTO THIS PARKING SPOT – FRONT IN ONLY'. Even though I found my welcome to the car park a little unusual, the best was yet to come. As I approached the lift, I noticed the two best spots both had the sign 'CEO PARKING ONLY'. I remember wondering why the CEO needed two reserved car spaces; did he park sideways? I later found out that Alan's predecessor kept one spot vacant for when his wife went shopping.

My arrival at reception did nothing to warm the cold sense of dread that had been building inside me since the car park. The first thing I noticed was another sign, in capitals of course, 'ALL VISITORS MUST SIGN IN – NO EXCEPTIONS'. The second thing I noticed was the stern expression of the receptionist, which actually made the sign look welcoming by comparison. She told me I was 15 minutes early for my appointment and that I 'must sit in that chair and wait'. I remember thinking that this company was very

particular about where things should be. After exactly 14 minutes, she called up to Alan's office and I was told to get the lift to level three where I would be 'greeted by Helga, Alan's executive assistant.' 'Greeted' was definitely too strong a word though Helga did at least manage a strained smile and a 'good afternoon' through a thick German accent, before ushering me into Alan's office.

To say I was relieved to meet Alan was an understatement. His warm handshake was matched by his big smile; something that felt very genuine to me. He was well dressed in casual trousers and an open neck shirt, something I thought to be a little unusual considering the formality that I had experienced at Bayer to this point. He looked like the pictures I had seen of the dashing racing car drivers of the fifties; a handsome middle aged gentleman who also showed some physical signs of wear and tear.

Alan's opening line about the Rottweilers, delivered with a slight cockney twang, put me at ease instantly. It gave me a strong clue into his cheeky disposition and wicked sense of humour. At a deeper level, his concern for my experience gave me an insight into what appeared to be a fairly well formed sense of emotional intelligence. I did note at the time, however, that Alan was trying to distance himself from his own organisation. But the thing that stuck me most was when he said 'we' need to fix this. By 'we' I got the distinct impression that he meant me and him. This was confirmed for me in the next two hours as Alan very openly shared all manner of internal and external forces compelling him to begin a journey of leadership and cultural change.

3.2.3. A barrage of forces

> Profits and revenue had been flat for several years and we were facing a very flat market moving forward. Australia has a very slowly growing and aging population, so any growth based on simple population growth was not going to happen. Australia is also a long way from developing markets, so that growth option was not available to us either. And while Australia's GDP growth had been quite good, it had mainly come through services - not a sector that traditionally uses a lot of our products.

Alan talked very eloquently to me about the external challenges of meeting the global parent's growth expectations in a difficult marketplace, as per his recollection above. As he listed these external challenges, I noted that he did so without much emotion. His tone became markedly more animated, however, when he began to speak about the issues with the culture locally and globally.

> The last thing my predecessor did before he left was to commission a Hewitt Employee Engagement survey. Unfortunately, it placed us in the bottom 10% of all employers in Australia. I remember the meeting where we got the results vividly; it was during my handover period. My predecessor's legacy to his executive team was to tell them 'this result has nothing to do with me, this is your fault!'

In addition to the very poor Hewitt survey results, he told me about a 'damning management audit' conducted recently by Bayer AG which showed that only 30% of Bayer ANZ staff trusted their leaders. As Alan relayed this information to me, I noticed Alan's animation turn to anger. Gone was the warm and jovial demeanour. Alan's face went red, the veins on his neck actually visibly popped out, and he looked positively distressed as he proceeded to paint a very dark picture of the Bayer culture that he had worked in for more than 20 years.

> Whilst my predecessor's complete lack of accountability infuriated me it didn't surprise me in the least, nor did the results of the audit for that matter. We were among a long-standing Prussian Empire in which hierarchy, power and bullying were considered acceptable behaviours, even thousands of miles away here in Australia.

One thing that particularly disturbed me about Alan's tirade was his description of what he termed the 'finance mafia'.

> Bayer always places a German expatriate in the role of Chief Financial Officer (CFO) alongside any non-German CEOs around the world; the 'finance mafia'. Everyone knew it was part of their job to keep tabs on us and report back to headquarters if anything went against the status quo.

Though Alan painted a dark picture of the culture in headquarters, he spoke very fondly of his direct boss Andreas. Alan has told me many times how Andreas was an exception to the status quo, despite the fact that he too was a German expat, a member of the global board, and a direct report to the global CEO. Andreas was concerned that the stagnation in the performance of the ANZ business was partly the result of complacency in the many German expatriates who occupied senior positions there. In a nutshell, he was worried that ANZ had become a retirement village for German executives who wished to see out the end of their careers in the sunshine.

> I received a brief from my boss before I came down to Australia. The brief was simple, he told me to 'de-build the Prussian Empire and get the business moving.'

As Alan described the task that he was charged with, I found it difficult to comprehend why he was being so incredibly trusting, so quickly, with someone he had met only a couple of hours ago. To be honest, I had neither the skills nor the inclination to delve into it at the time. Top of my agenda was to make Alan and Bayer my client. They ticked all of the boxes I was looking for in a client; a reputable brand, a CEO led engagement, focused on leadership and culture, with a medium to long term view of change.

I gave it my best shot; I expressed my belief that leadership creates culture and culture creates performance. I backed this up with research from 'gurus' like Daniel Goleman, Martin Seligman and Jim Collins, and tools from Human Synergistics, into what appeared to be a coherent solution to Alan's challenges. We discussed a seven month engagement focused on measuring the Leadership/Impact of the executive team, measuring the culture of the organisation, and developing a road map to bridge the identified issues. In fact, we ended the meeting looking at diaries with Alan's Executive Officer, Vaughn, because Alan wanted to ensure that I was available to kick off our engagement at a two-day offsite already scheduled for his 15 person executive team in late May. Alan asked me to get him a formal proposal urgently. I did so and just 48 hours later, he signed it.

3.2.4. Finding religion

> You told me that leadership creates culture and culture creates performance. It's what I felt intuitively but no one had ever expressed it that clearly to me before. I had lots of negative examples from my time at Bayer to prove this equation was true; it just made immediate sense to me.

When I first expressed this idea of a relationship between leadership, culture and performance to Alan, it seemed to resonate deeply; his face became animated, and he moved forward to the edge of his seat. In

2001, the leadership-culture-performance link was an emerging field of research but in my opinion, not particularly accessible to senior executives. Those executives whom I interacted with thought organisational culture was important but a little 'soft and fluffy'. It was hard to quantify and less tangible than 'harder' concepts like strategy, structure and metrics.

At a practical level, this framework gave Alan a language to link the performance challenges being faced by Bayer ANZ with the agenda for cultural change articulated by Andreas. It was particularly resonant with Alan because in the Bayer structure, levers like strategy and metrics were largely handed down from Bayer AG through the various business units. Leadership and culture were two levers that a country CEO like Alan largely had control over. The fact that there was an underlying rigour and methodology to the idea really tipped him over the edge. To me, it seemed that he had found religion.

> Being a polymer chemist by trade, I am quite technically minded. So when you came along and showed me a rigorous approach to leadership, something I knew was critical for turning around our performance but was struggling to access, it was as though I finally saw the light.

At the time, I thought Alan's exuberance was a result of my substantive and clever framing of an important idea. Over the years since then, Alan and I have arrived at a deeper appreciation of the significant personal experiences that prepared him to receive my message. I now know that there were many more layers inside Alan's seemingly impulsive buying behaviour. Alan was desperate to embark on a personal journey of transformation and I was in the right place, at the right time, with the right message.

3.2.5. Personal ambition wrapped in an organisational agenda

> On reflection, I think my eight years in German headquarters was about a young man who was trying to survive in a culture of power and status. I then spent seven years in the UK, which was a bit better than the German culture, but still very dominated by a task focus over a people focus. But it was time in India that really started to open my eyes to the people side of management. India is a very spiritual place where the power and task stuff doesn't work so well. It's really where my curiosity for leadership took hold.

Alan spent four and a half years in India in what was his first CEO role. He now describes it as a blessing in disguise, but at first I think he saw it more of a curse. In the Bayer world, the India CEO job is not one that is coveted; living conditions are difficult, and doing business is challenging. Alan would often drive past dead bodies and derelict towns as he rode in an air conditioned, chauffeur-driven car to work. He took the job because he understood it as a stepping stone to a more desirable CEO role. His boss told him that if he did his time there, he would be able to choose his next engagement. The blessing arrived in the form of a more spiritual, mindful, and purposeful way of life that Alan was able to observe and interact with.

> I began to question my definition of success, from purely measures of status and wealth, to a definition which included happiness, a sense of purpose and a desire for contribution. It gave me a real desire to make a positive difference to the people that I led.

When his time in India came to a conclusion, Alan had no hesitation in accepting his next engagement as the CEO of Bayer ANZ. The move to Australia was a homecoming of sorts for Alan. Though he was raised

in the north of England, his father was a well known professional rugby league player from Wagga in country New South Wales, who had seen action with the Royal Australian Air Force in World War Two. For some reason, Alan always saw Australia as home and so the Bayer ANZ role felt like the perfect job to Alan, as he reflects below.

> Here I was at 50 years old and I had the job I'd always wanted. I was determined to make a difference personally. After spending eight years in headquarters living with really 'confined, don't think out of the box, don't do anything different kind of thinking,' I finally got the opportunity to try out some of my new beliefs and say, 'hey let's try something different.' So I was determined to do something and not just sit back and take all the perks of the job like my predecessors.

One thing that strikes me about the early days with Alan was his tendency to frame himself as a victim of the Bayer culture, as if distancing himself from the 'Prussians', the 'Rottweilers' and the 'bullies'. At the time, I suspected that there may have been some deep rooted issues perpetuating this tendency but I did not yet feel that Alan and I had the level of trust in our relationship required to explore it. In our early discussions, I had actually seen Alan display a level of aggression that mirrored the 'Prussian Empire' that he was charged with de-building. I wondered what impact Alan was having on the business. For Alan's part, he too was unsure.

> One of the problems I was facing was that I had no real indication of my leadership effectiveness. Working for 20 years for Bayer, going from sales right up to CEO, I actually never had one formal, written-down appraisal. So as I progressed up the company hierarchy, I had this sense of worry because no one ever gave me a clear picture of where I stood; my strengths or weaknesses. I felt a little unsafe.

In any case, along with his executive team, Alan had already committed to formally measure his impact using the Leadership/Impact tool, and I would soon have some data to explore Alan's impact in a systematic way.

3.2.6. The red and green mountains

> I thought holding the offsite in the 'blue' mountains was clever considering we were aiming for Constructive leadership. It turned out to be wishful thinking. As one of my executive team members said, 'we should have gone to the red and green mountains instead!'

As I received the executive team's Leadership/Impact reports in my office the week before the offsite, I knew it was going to be an interesting experience. As per Alan's quote above, the Defensive 'red and green' styles dominated most of the profiles. The first thing that struck me was the similarity between the consolidated profile for the executive team of 15 people, and the culture profile for the whole organisation based on a sample of 221 Bayer ANZ employees. Figure 9 displays these profiles respectively. My theory about the relationship between leadership and culture, which Alan had latched onto even more strongly than me, now seemed to be staring back at me.

Bayer ANZ Executive Team

September 2001

L/I Actual data (n=16)

Bayer ANZ Culture

September 2001

OCI Actual data (n=190)
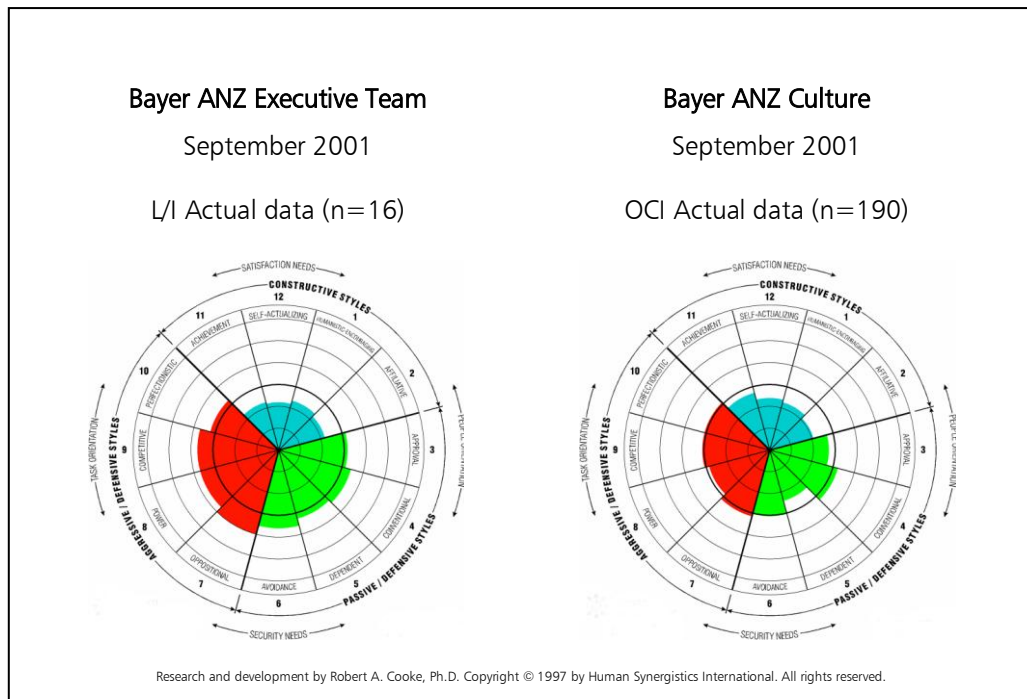
Figure 9: Bayer ANZ Executive Team group data Vs Bayer ANZ Culture Data (2001)

The second thing that struck me was Alan's profile; not so much his *actual* impact, which was a real mix of red, green and blue, but his *ideal* impact.

> My *actual* impact wasn't pretty, and I wasn't happy with it. What was shocking and very confronting was my *ideal* impact. What the hell was I thinking? That hit me right between the eyes.

In the accreditation process for Leadership/Impact run by Human Synergistics, I learned that one of the advantages of this tool is that leaders set their own vision for their impact; this is called the *ideal* impact. According to the theory, this is typically a very 'blue' or Constructive vision. Figure 10 shows the average *ideal* Circumplex for 5073 Australian and New Zealand leaders, versus Alan's *ideal*.

Hypothetically, change agents are generally able to hold the leader accountable for the inevitable gap between their *ideal* and *actual* Leadership/Impact. Yet here I was with my first CEO client attempting Leadership/Impact, and unfortunately, Alan's *ideal* did not exactly conform to the theory. While his four blue and four green styles were in alignment with this theory; being large and small respectively, three of his four red styles were not. His *ideal* Competitive impact was at the 75th percentile, his Oppositional at the 80th and, most astonishingly, his *ideal* Power impact was at the 93rd percentile! In ten years now of using the Leadership/Impact tool, Alan's *ideal* impact from 2001 is among the most Aggressive-Defensive profile that I have ever seen. Alan and I have spoken many times over the years about where his *ideal* impact came from. We have come to the conclusion that Alan was mirroring the authority figures in his life.

I've always had a problem with the German culture of banging the table, and using power-oriented stuff, however I grew up in that culture so I started to internalise it. I have to say now when I look back to reflect on it, I'm appalled by it.
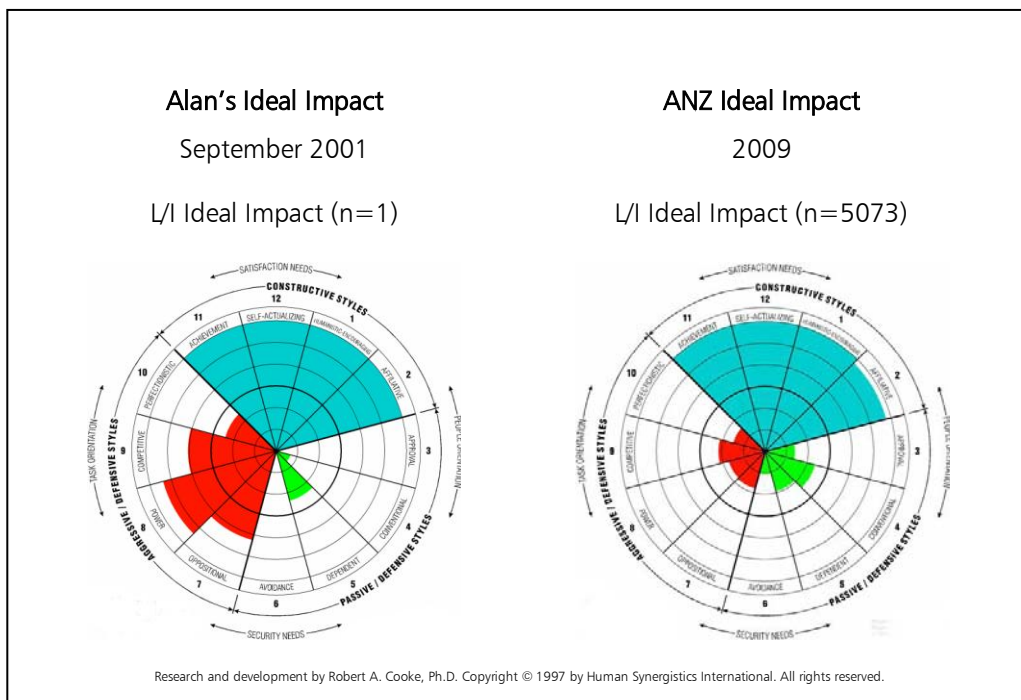
Figure 10: Alan's Ideal Impact data (2001) Vs ANZ Ideal Impact data (2009)

At the time of the debrief, I was relieved to find that Alan was prepared to instantly disassociate himself from his 'appalling' *ideal* profile, and publicly commit to a very blue, Constructive *ideal*. As I reflect on this moment years later, it strikes me as interesting that he was prepared to let go of his *ideal* profile so quickly, especially given that it was a manifestation of many years of thinking, perception and experience. After several conversations, Alan and I have concluded that there were several factors at play encouraging him to let it go. Firstly, the Leadership/Impact diagnostic surfaced a set of beliefs in Alan that he was harbouring at a subconscious level; they were previously not accessible to him in a conscious way. Now that these beliefs had 'surfaced', Alan was able to assess them in a rational way and let go of these beliefs that were not serving him. Secondly, having 'found religion' in the leadership-culture-performance framework, Alan had very publicly declared his desire to create a very Constructive culture at Bayer ANZ. It was as if he trapped himself in a web of his own making; it would not be possible to hold others accountable to a Constructive culture if Alan didn't espouse it himself. Thirdly, Alan had seen the statistical correlations between red cultures and volatility and did not want any more volatility in his life.

In hindsight, I suspect there was a fourth factor at work early in our engagement. Alan has told me many times over the years that he saw me as somewhat of a 'guru' myself, even back then. With that context, my suspicion is that Alan was worried he would lose our close camaraderie now that he had been 'found out' with an *ideal* impact that did not match the Constructive norm. Previous to his data, it had felt like

Alan and I were a Bonnie and Clyde partnership up against the establishment. Alan's data showed that his belief system was actually more representative of the culture he complained about.

Alan's *actual* impact (Figure 11) was less dramatic though it did contain some interesting elements.

Alan's Ideal Impact	Alan's Actual Impact
September 2001	September 2001
L/I Ideal Impact (n=1)	L/I Actual Impact (n=6)
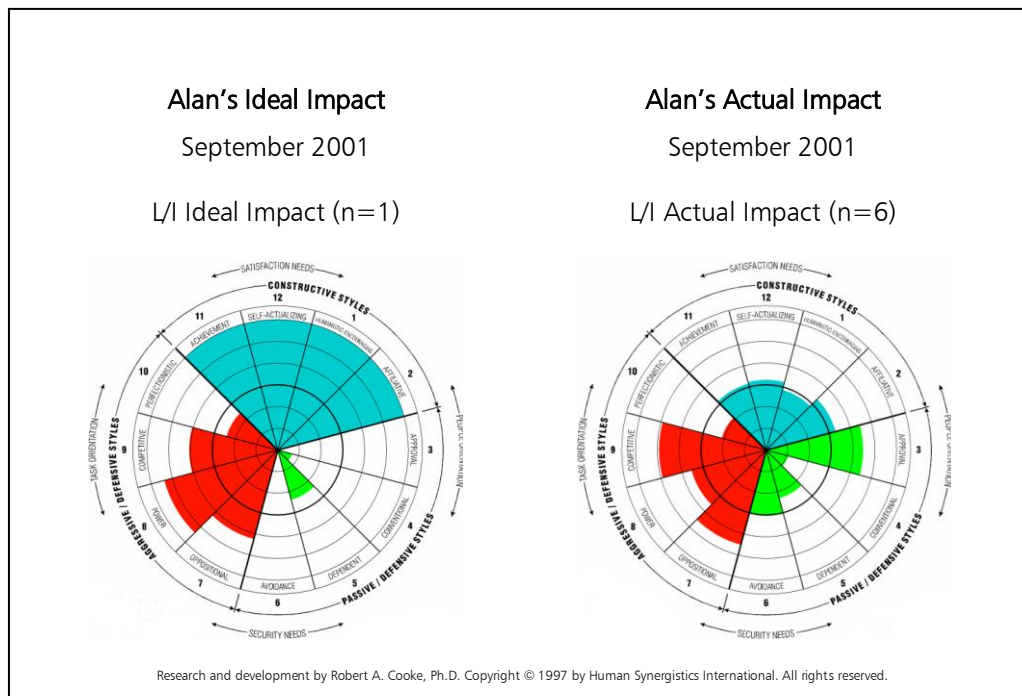
Figure 11: Alan's Ideal Impact data (2001) Vs Alan's Actual Impact data (2001)

As represented in Figure 11, his four blue styles hovered around the 50th percentile. His Oppositional and Competitive impacts were notably higher exceeding the 80th percentile. Though this conflicted with Alan's perception of himself at first, Alan had an 'aha' moment in conversation with a colleague.

> When I first got my results and I looked at my Competitive score, I couldn't see it. Then a colleague gave the example of a meeting where someone came in late and I used the famous Billy Connolly line, 'well thanks for coming, you haven't missed anything, I was only killing time until you got here.' I had actually thought that was really funny until I began to understand the impact on that individual – making them feel two feet tall. I later found out that they were late because of a personal problem.

The biggest gap between Alan's *ideal* and *actual* impact was for the style of Approval. Alan's *ideal* impact for Approval was at zero, while he was actually motivating and encouraging approval in others to the 80th percentile. Recently, Alan reflected on the origin of his own need for approval.

> I felt like nothing I did was ever good enough for my dad. I think getting my PhD at 23 was about proving that I was something to him. My push to advance up the corporate ladder was probably about the same thing; proving I was good enough.

In hindsight, I believe Alan was having the same impact on his subordinates as his father had on him. In the early days, Alan drew a pretty distinct line between his friends and foes; there was very little grey area

in between. My suspicion is that people who were in the former camp were very careful not to lose favour with Alan. It wasn't until sometime later, however, that this issue came to the fore.

Alan, and the executive team as a whole, seemed to receive their feedback quite well considering the very Defensive data. Even some of the more difficult members, appeared to get on board. The most compelling element of the whole exercise in the opinion of the team was the uncanny similarity between the leadership and culture data. Combined with the very public Hewitt survey results, and the Bayer AG management audit, there was a real sense of urgency to take some actions that would be visible across the organisation. Consequently, we spent a great deal of time devising an action plan that would create a more Constructive, achievement-oriented culture.

I believe that it is worth mentioning that at this point in the journey, I did not force Alan and the team into disciplined individual action planning that they would be held accountable for, nor did I engage with Alan in a process of deep reflection in the way that I would encourage today. I was not yet confident enough to drive the same level of accountability in the individual action plans as I was driving in the culture action plan. In essence, the cultural agenda was comfortable for me and seemed to be energising for the group. That said, Alan and the team did demonstrate the principles of Constructive leadership by sending some strong symbols to the organisation about their desire to break down the 'Prussian Empire' once and for all.

3.2.7. De-building the Empire; one brick at a time

> The first thing I did was to take the car park signs down. The next day I parked anywhere. I went down a little bit later in the morning and the cars that had been parked on either side of me were gone! This went on for two more weeks before I realised what was going on. People were actually moving their cars away from my car because they thought I was going to check if they left before me. How crazy is that? So I started to move my car around the car park two or three times a day. Finally they got the message and now nobody worries about parking next to me.

The car park situation was the first of several simple changes which signalled to the organisation that something was changing. I can recall several different interactions with Bayer staff in the cafeteria in Pymble where Alan's car park behaviour was the primary subject of conversation. I think this was partly because of the signal that it sent, and partly because of the mischievous way that Alan actually did it. I believe it made Alan more human and accessible in the eyes of his staff; something they had not experienced from a Bayer ANZ CEO before. The positive feedback on this one simple change was so strong, that management at all Bayer work sites around the country decided to take down the reserved parking signs.

While addressing the parking situation was a planned activity, some of the most powerful changes initiated by Alan were opportunistic.

> My predecessor's predecessor used to have a clear desk policy. So what he used to do on a Friday night was to send his lackey round the office to take Polaroid photographs of messy desks, and he'd pin

them up in reception on a Monday on a cork board with a message saying 'if this is your desk, then contact the MD', and I said 'no, I don't believe that, it can't be true.'

Alan soon found out much to his bemusement that, in fact, this story was true.

> I was walking around level two and I made eye contact with a lady I hadn't met before. With this worried look on her face she says, 'I'm not always this untidy'. I couldn't believe it, the story was true! So I told her to come with me and I took her up to my office to show her what a really untidy desk looked like. I know that story spread right through Pymble because I had dozens of people tease me about my desk after that!

The final part of this interaction proved even more powerful for Alan.

> While she was in my office making fun of my desk, she gave me a great point. She said 'I can't see out of it'. She was right; it sent a very poor message. So I made the decision right then and there to knock the wall down and put a glass partition in.

The 'clean desk' story above is probably the most famous one from Alan's first year in the CEO role. I think that is because it had the effect of symbolically 'burying' a much maligned piece of Bayer history. Perhaps more importantly, it signalled to the organisation that the CEO was very open to feedback and suggestions from the staff.

On reflection, I have come to understand that Alan had great natural instincts for identifying powerful symbols of change. Knocking out the brick wall in his office is a great example of this instinct. In fact, much of what I espouse today about the power of symbols I learned with and from Alan during the first few months of our partnership together at Bayer. I learned that symbols are a fast, inexpensive and memorable way to create desired changes in leadership and culture. It is my experience today, some ten years later, that symbols are an underutilised lever for shifting the culture of an organisation.

Perhaps the most powerful symbol Alan sent was to exit his Human Resources (HR) General Manager, Jody, and to recruit a dynamic young HR professional named Glen from outside the organisation to revitalise this function. The HR function was so out of touch with the needs of the organisation that, in the early days, people would tell me that HR at Bayer stood for 'human remains'. I helped Alan to recruit Glen through my network and we gave him a brief to change the bureaucratic HR systems to empower and reward people for promoting the desired culture. The positive sentiment was further increased when two German expatriates announced their retirement. Both were replaced by local GMs which also sent a very positive message to the local organisation that the culture was changing; the positions that were once reserved for German expats were now available to high performing local staff who embraced the desired culture.

For the most part, I observed Alan and the executive team enter 2002 with an increasing sense of confidence and momentum. Bayer ANZ hit all of its financial targets for 2001 in spite of the global recall of the cholesterol drug Lipobay that wiped €5 million from their bottom line. This achievement turned out to be quite unique across the Bayer world at that time and Alan put the result down to the more open and collaborative culture in Bayer ANZ, whereby each division pooled its reserves to ensure they hit the collective target.

We ended 2001 by recontracting for another 12 months. The key features of the next stage of our engagement were to roll down the Leadership/Impact process to the 65 direct reports of the executive team, to conduct a series of road shows led by Alan to engage all 800 staff in the culture change process, and to implement four major initiatives designed to transform the culture of Bayer ANZ.

While I felt that Alan was making progress on his own leadership journey, he appeared most comfortable to me whenever he was taking a swipe at head office. Based on Alan's leadership data, I knew he had issues of his own that he needed to address and I determined to make 2002 the year where I would nudge him down this path.

3.2.8. Battle with Approval

> I was excited to show headquarters what we were doing and what we were achieving; how we were actually living the Bayer AG tag line of 'Performance through people'. Aside from my boss, I got nothing but blank stares from the other CEOs. I might as well have been speaking Chinese.

Alan visited Bayer headquarters in early 2002 for the regular global summit of CEOs. In the lead up to this meeting, he talked with me repeatedly, and at length, about wanting to share the ANZ journey with all of the other CEOs while he was there. He felt that with the financial success of 2001, he now had the final piece to the leadership, culture and performance equation.

I felt uncomfortable with Alan's intention for several reasons. Firstly, we had been on the journey only a few months and I was not sure that the positive business results were a direct result of the program; clearly Alan believed the equation more completely than me in those early days. Secondly, I did not think that the mainly German CEOs of a very traditional German company would be interested in a cultural transformation initiated by a geography that represented a minute portion of global revenue. Thirdly, I felt like it was a distraction from the main game for us; transforming the local leadership and culture. Finally, I was worried that Alan's evangelism, combined with his negative view of headquarters, would encourage him to lecture his colleagues. I talked through my concerns with Alan but he decided he still wanted to do it, albeit with a toned down version of his pitch based on my coaching. He was very enthusiastic and, taking a much softer approach than I would today, I did not push my point.

I wish I did; I remember how deflated Alan sounded when he called me from Germany after his big pitch to tell me about the 'blank stares'. He was very sarcastic and negative in his recap of events, something I had experienced several times over the months we had known each other. At the time, I remember feeling that this exercise cut Alan so deeply because he seemed to be constantly seeking acceptance from his peer group and his superiors. On the one hand, he would rubbish them, and on the other hand, he seemed to care deeply about what they thought of him. Geoff, the GM of Bayer ANZ's Medical Imaging business and one of Alan's closest confidents in Bayer ANZ reinforces this sentiment.

> Alan was seeking lots of approval when he first got the CEO role. I felt that he was very insecure in the way that he was constantly worrying about what people in headquarters were thinking about all the time.

It was this stage of Alan's journey that I began to understand the extent of his deeply held need for approval. In our first one-on-one coaching session after Alan's return from Germany, I decided to confront him on his apparent need for approval and acceptance. I told him what I and others had observed, and asked him where he thought this need came from. In a very matter of fact way, he told me that the 'bully' style of management that he had mostly experienced in his time at Bayer had worn away his self-confidence and probably led to his need for approval. I felt relieved that we finally had this elephant on the table, but I sensed that there was more to this story. About six weeks later during a game of golf Alan told me that he'd been thinking about my question very deeply and thought his need for approval had deeper origins.

> My father was a real bully; physically and emotionally. What do you do as a five year old boy when your mother is being beaten in the next room? I could never compete with him physically so I chose other paths to feel good about myself. My brother used to say, 'I bet you will be relieved when he dies'. Actually it left a huge hole.

Suffice it to say that it was very hard to make small talk on the golf course after that revelation. In fact, we spent most of the afternoon in the club house in a very deep conversation about how our upbringing affects us later in life. Alan did most of the talking while I did most of the listening; partly because Alan just needed a friendly ear but also because I did not know what to say. My coaching experience at that point had been very shallow and I did not want to trivialise Alan's insight. What I was able to connect in Alan's mind was that the leaders who so infuriated him in headquarters were also the products of their experiences. I offered to Alan the notion that 'people do the best they can with what they know'. Once Alan accepted this notion, he was better able to let go of the victim mentality, and the myriad of conspiracies that occupied his thinking, and this became a guide post for us moving forward.

After our very deep conversation on the golf course, Alan committed to his leadership journey with renewed vigour. The energy that Alan had been injecting into changing Germany was now focused inward on changing himself.

3.2.9. The gift of sight

> My mum used to say all the time in her wonderful Manchester slang 'I wish the Lord the gift he gee us, to see ourselves as others see us'. The translation is basically I wish that I had the gift of seeing myself as others saw me. I used to think 'yeah mum, whatever'. Turns out she was spot on!

In the first year of our relationship, I had found myself treading fairly warily in our one-on-one coaching sessions; partly because of Alan's disposition and partly because of my lack of coaching experience. As we moved into our second year together, our sessions became more frequent, and my feedback to Alan became more direct in nature.

> Your relationship with me was one of total trust. I never questioned your motivation; I knew that you wanted me and Bayer to be successful. That's probably why you could give me feedback that very few people could. It's probably also why I accepted your very direct feedback, even when I didn't like it.

In fact, now that we had the 'big elephant' about his dad on the table, nothing was out of bounds; his first marriage, the distance from his two teenage children who lived in the UK, some emerging health

issues, and his second wife's desire to have a child at a late stage in his life. Alan's trust for me introduced a real authenticity into our conversations. On one hand, I now had a clear picture of the personal issues that were affecting his professional life. On the other hand, Alan's trust placed a very heavy burden on my shoulders.

I told Alan that despite his attempts to create an 'open' culture via symbols like his glass office, other people actually found it very difficult to give him feedback; even when he asked for it directly. Geoff concurs with this sentiment below.

> He had a big desire to change himself...but he was not always happy with the feedback.

Recently, Alan gave me some more insight into where his resistance was coming from back then.

> When you're the CEO of an organisation that has a heritage of fear and mistrust, it's very difficult to solicit real and honest feedback. It's equally difficult to take feedback because all you've ever gotten is criticism. When somebody starts to give you feedback, your defences go up and you question their motivation.

In one of our coaching sessions, Alan and I discussed the notion of forming an inner circle from his trusted allies on the executive team so that he could get the feedback that he needed, on the ground in real time. Selfishly, I felt this would also help to spread the burden I was feeling. Alan accepted that he now had some very capable and trustworthy allies in Geoff and Glen, and decided to open up to his colleagues. Alan recalls one particularly powerful piece of feedback from Glen that was delivered in a humorous but very direct way.

> Glen told me that I talked too much and listened too little; that I was always pitching and selling my ideas. I told him to do whatever it takes to stop me doing this. The next day he brought in a roll of gaffer tape and put it on the table in a management meeting. I got the message.

Geoff reinforces how important Alan's willingness to take on feedback was for advancing his leadership journey.

> I think that having that direct feedback from trusted team members was a real valuable 'how to' for Alan. Rather than just telling him what he was doing wrong, we gave him thoughts and suggestions on what he could do differently. So I think that was a key driver for how he made the transformation.

Perhaps the most challenging feedback Alan received from his trusted team members, and from me as well, was that he needed to manage his stress much better.

> Alan was a really stressed individual. I think he was under enormous pressure, though I didn't ever see him explode.

As Geoff states above, Alan's fiery personality and tendency to take things personally caused us some concern. Our feedback was timely; 2002 would certainly test his physical and psychological capacity to handle pressure from many different directions.

3.2.10. A time of change

> I agreed with the decision to restructure the global company into four largely separate business units, but it had massive implications for me and all the other country CEOs. We effectively took responsibility for one business unit, as well as all of the service functions like Finance and HR. I was still called the CEO, but my direct authority extended only to Polymers and the service functions.

The first significant event of 2002 was the complete restructure of the global organisation in response to the Lipobay recall and the subsequent hammering of the share price. Alan had mixed feelings about the restructure, as he states above. While he thought that it was the right thing for the corporation, he felt that both his job and his leadership and culture journey were now under threat.

> I felt quite vulnerable. I had lost some of my formal power plus I knew that Polymers was the first business unit Bayer AG wanted to sell. At the same time, I knew that the culture change program was now even more important for ANZ; it was the one thing that could hold the organisation together.

At the time, I was impressed by Alan's unwavering commitment to our shared agenda in the midst of corporate upheaval. Not surprisingly, there was a lot of fear and uncertainty in the local organisation about the implications of the global restructure. In an effort to allay these concerns, Alan stepped-up his already gruelling schedule of staff road shows across Australia and New Zealand. I accompanied Alan on many of these trips and watched him engage very deeply and authentically with ANZ staff. On many occasions, we stayed long past the scheduled finished time so that Alan could answer all of the group's questions and concerns. In retrospect, I believe that our engagement together gave Alan an agenda for his leadership at a time when the organisation really needed a leader to make sense of the environment. This may be one reason why Bayer ANZ, unlike most of the other Bayer countries around the world, maintained a positive financial trajectory in 2002 despite the many challenges.

The big changes in Alan's life at this time were not just professional. At fifty years old, he was about to become a father for the third time. On September 6th 2002, Ellie McGilvray was born. On Easter Monday 2003, Alan had a suspected heart attack.

3.2.11. The 'end' of approval

> It was quite an awakening. I started to develop an awareness of my own physical well being as well as the need to keep myself balanced in life. I realised I was spending too much time in the office, worrying about things that I couldn't fix, and making myself available 24/7 whenever the people from Germany wanted something. And then I had the confidence to say 'hell no, just because it's 10:00am there doesn't mean that you can ring me at 8:00pm here. I can't be effective. I'm just putting my little daughter to bed, so please don't ring me at that time.' So I put a firm divide in as much as I could between work and life, and was very strict about keeping to it.

Previous to the dramatic events in Alan's life, he would have taken calls from Germany at any time of the day or night for fear of disappointing his corporate colleagues. It seemed to me that his heart attack, which turned out to be minor in the end, and the birth of Ellie, gave him a greater perspective of what was truly important to him in life. Alan was undergoing what I believe was the biggest change in his leadership journey; letting go of the need for approval, particularly from headquarters. This change had mixed implications.

When I stopped seeking approval from Head Office, I found that I got myself into issues, but I found those issues were worth fighting for. If I was going to go down, I wanted to leave a legacy in my wake. I wasn't prepared to compromise my new found values.

Alan's sense of legacy and purpose was put to the test in 2003 shortly after we agreed to re-engage in the culture change agenda for another 12 months; albeit without the Chemical and Crop Science divisions who had opted out of the process to do their own thing. Alan's immediate boss Andreas, as well as the global CEO of the company had both been replaced and Alan went to Germany to meet with his new superiors on the future of the ANZ business.

In addition to the blow of losing Andreas, his best ally in headquarters, Alan was dealt two further blows by his new bosses. Firstly, he was told that Bayer AG would shortly announce the sale of the Polymer business. Once the sale was complete, Alan knew that he would be vulnerable as a very highly paid CEO with no direct profit and loss responsibility. Secondly, he was scrutinised very hard on our change agenda.

This work was such a revelation for me and many members of our team. I guess I just wanted the Germans to share my enthusiasm for what was possible in our organisation. It was probably a little naive in hindsight.

Despite 18 months of exceptional financial performance, his new bosses did not like talk of 'culture change' and did not appreciate the scale of his investment in this process. Alan told me that in his meeting with them, he calmly maintained his line on the link between leadership, culture and performance, and managed to get out of the meeting without a firm instruction to stop the work. In fact, as Alan related this meeting to me blow by blow on his return to Sydney, I couldn't help but marvel at how well he had handled himself under such pressure from the two biggest authority figures in his professional life. I also marvelled at how calm he was in spite of the impending Polymers sale and the loss of his best advocate in headquarters.

The biggest test of Alan's progress on his need for approval came with the integration of the Aventis business in Australia, which had been bought by Bayer AG some months earlier.

When we integrated Aventis worldwide the statement was that the country Finance Directors will lead the integration within each geography. I looked at my Finance Director and found him wanting and I looked at another guy, actually our head of IT, and found him much more talented and appropriate for the job. So based on their own assessment criteria, I proposed him and they accepted it.

I remember the smile on Alan's face when he got this approved; not just because he had made a good decision for the company but that he had resisted every historical urge to seek the approval of his superiors. He knew it would create waves but did it anyway. Unfortunately, his apparent triumph was short lived.

The Finance Director spat the dummy, jumped on an airplane and went over there. I was told to change the decision three months into the process. I said 'I am not changing it'. And they said 'well on what basis have you made that decision?' And I said 'on the basis of the Bayer AG imposed management audit results'. They said 'ignore the results of the management audit.' In the end, I had no choice but to change it. I remember Geoff saying to me at the time 'well at least you will improve your approval ratings level now!'

Even though Alan was ultimately overruled on this decision, I concur with Geoff sentiment that Alan had given his approval need a good kick. He had sent a strong message to the organisation that it was more important to achieve the best possible result, rather than seek approval from your superiors. Over the coming months, I saw him challenge his staff in the Australian organisation to do the same.

3.2.12. The good ship Bayer

> It has been made quite clear to me that the 'good ship Bayer' is peopled by us...empowered to act, not by passengers.

Alan received this email following one of his many road show presentations during this period from a staff member three levels down in the organisation. He was particularly proud of this note because he felt that it was evidence of the Achievement impact that he was having on his staff. In this period of intense change, Alan was asking everyone in the organisation to step-up and act like a leader, regardless of their position in the hierarchy.

On the back of the road shows, I noticed a difference in the way Alan was interacting with his staff. As he reveals in his quote below, he was less concerned about trying to win people over and more concerned with building genuine relationships that were linked to a sense of purpose.

> When I went out on the road to talk to my staff I would actually make a big effort to remember their names and remember what they told me; when somebody has got a birthday or when somebody has got a child that has been sick. And rather than doing it because it looks neat, I would do it because I really felt something about it.

Ironically, as Alan stopped focusing on being liked, he was overwhelmed with the positive energy that was returned to him. People started making values-based decisions and started giving discretionary effort, as Alan proudly recalls below.

> One of the refrigeration units broke down with haemophilia drugs... the guys went out and fixed it on a Saturday morning of their own accord. Why did they do it? Because I had taken an interest in my people, so they took an interest in me. Not to please me, we wouldn't have suffered as the stuff was insured, but the poor haemophiliacs who didn't get their product would have been let down. They were in a culture where they felt valued so they took accountability for the situation off their own backs in the interests of the client. I didn't even know about it until somebody called me.

Another thing I observed in Alan at this time was that, in addition to the increased levels of engagement that he was developing in the organisation, he was getting a real kick out of coaching and mentoring others with the lessons he had been learning.

> The thing that I get the best kick out of is getting good people and helping them to realise their potential... picking out the talent and helping it grow. You can get the best sales figures, but watch the young guys grow, watch them go overseas, watch them do a good job, and you can stand back and say 'hey I helped that person'. You can then go home at night and think 'hey I had a great day' and 'didn't those guys do well'.

I was very happy with the progress Alan was making, and there was a significant degree of interest from the marketplace in the success that Bayer was enjoying in Australia and New Zealand, despite the global

chaos. In early 2003, Alan was approached by the Managing Director of the CEO Forum; a network for local CEOs of multi-national subsidiaries that Alan was a member of, to share his story with the group.

3.2.13. <u>Corporate villain, Australian hero</u>

> I was nervous and excited to tell my story to other CEOs. I tried to be brutally honest about the issues I had gone through and the hurdles I had overcome. I wanted to inspire others to go on this type of journey.

Alan and I spent many hours crafting the CEO Forum presentation and one message came out loud and clear; leadership creates culture and culture creates performance. I was fortunate enough to sit beside Alan as he told his story to more than 40 CEOs who were visibly enthralled by both the content of Alan's story and his telling. So much so that Alan inspired several other CEOs in the group to undertake similar leadership journeys in an effort to improve their commercial performance. As the word spread about the 'Bayer transformation', Alan received all manner of requests for speaking and media including prime time spots on the Channel 10 evening news and the Sky Business Report.

Alan was subsequently approached by the Managing Director of Human Synergistics to present as a keynote speaker at the 5th Conference on Leadership and Culture in July of 2003. This invitation had a massive impact on Alan. A year earlier, he had sat next to me when the CEO of Lion Nathan, Gordon Cairns, engrossed the audience in a powerful story of individual and cultural transformation. Alan told me on that day his dream would be to follow in Gordon's footsteps one day; now just twelve months later that day had arrived.

Needless to say, Alan and I prepared diligently for his talks in Sydney and Melbourne. He delivered his story with such passion and humour that he was met with rousing applause. He even made a fan out of Gordon Cairns who made a point of seeking Alan out after the conference. In the afterglow of the conference, Alan and I reflected on the irony of his situation; maligned by his corporate superiors for his passion, purposefulness and sense of humour, but loved for it everywhere else.

Preparing for all of these public forums with Alan represented my first attempt to package up a compelling story of transformation. In hindsight, I think the very process of packaging the Bayer story became an accelerant for Alan's journey in its own right. The process fuelled a great deal of reflection and insight for both of us on what had worked over the previous two years and what had not worked. This process of sense making had the effect of energising both of us to spread the leadership, culture and performance message as widely as we could.

As we approached the remeasure of Alan's Leadership/Impact in October 2003, two years since his first measure, I felt a mix of excitement and anxiety. I felt that Alan had made some real improvements in the past year but was not sure how his confrontations with headquarters, and the new power dynamics within the Australian leadership structure would translate into his results.

3.2.14. <u>The journey of a thousand steps</u>

> I was a bit disappointed with my results but you explained the shifts were substantial. I was delighted to have reduced my approval by so much but even more pleased at the dramatic change in my thinking around the *ideal*, which was now Constructive. At least I had the right idea!

In 2003, Alan's *ideal* impact was the most Constructive *ideal* possible, with blue to the 100th percentile and not an ounce of red or green to be seen anywhere. This proved quite a contrast to his first *ideal* impact from 2001 (see Figure 12).
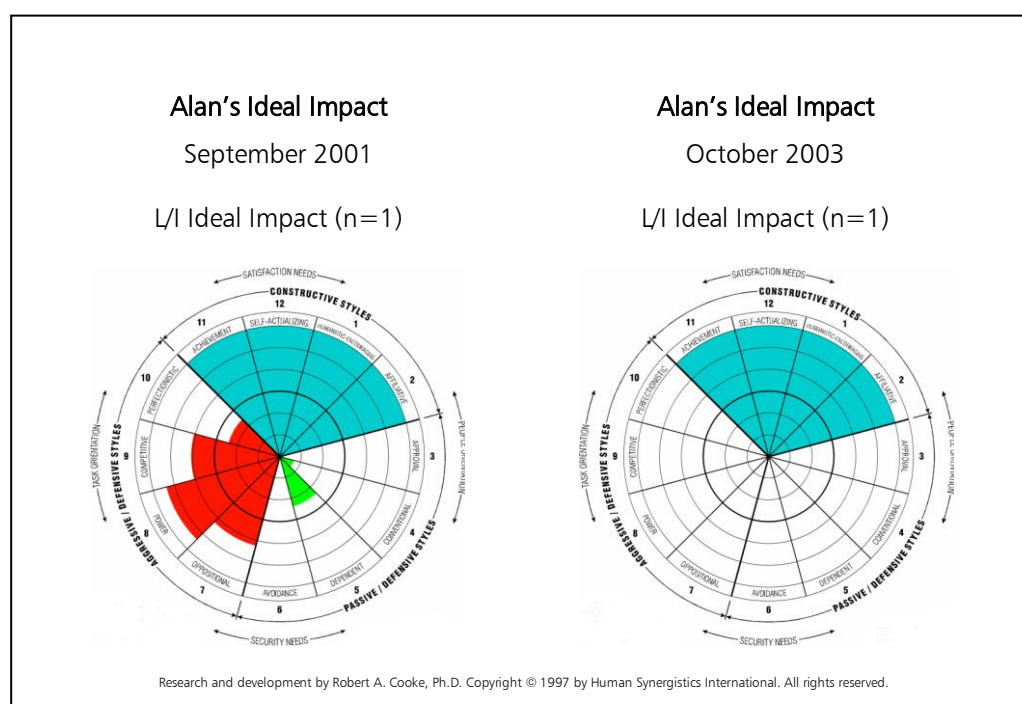
Figure 12: Alan's Ideal Impact data (2001) Vs Alan's Ideal Impact data (2003)

As I had hoped, Alan's *actual* impact also contained some notable shifts (see Figure 13 below), despite Alan's mixed feelings expressed in the quote above.

The shifts were telling of what I had seen in the past 3 years. There was still some of his Oppositional, Competitive and Power impact from the first measure which I put down to the fallout of his ongoing conflict with headquarters. Nonetheless, each of these styles had reduced. Overall, blue was greater than red or green.

There were four very noteworthy shifts. Firstly, Alan decreased his Approval impact by 25 percentile points. Accompanying this shift in Approval was a 23 percentile point increase in Affiliative. This was indicative of the changes I had seen in the way Alan approached relationships now; much less about encouraging others to please him and much more about fostering genuine relationships.
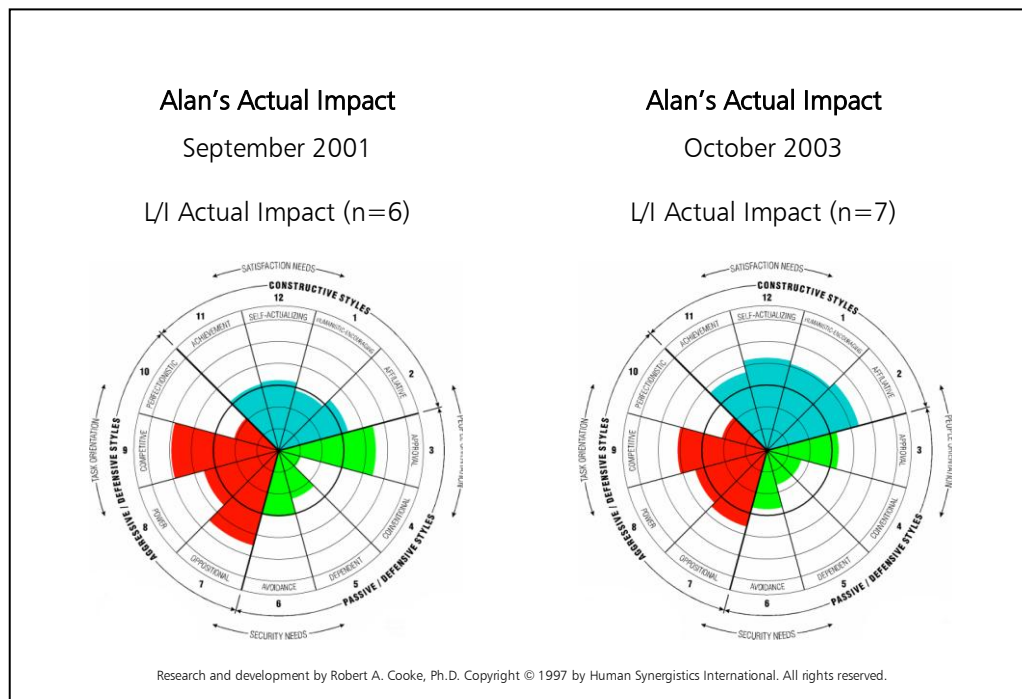
Figure 13: Alan's Actual Impact data (2001) Vs Alan's Actual Impact data (2003)

Alan's single biggest shift at 29 percentile points was in the Humanistic-Encouraging style. Developing others was something that Alan was personally passionate about and I had certainly witnessed Alan encourage his leadership team and their management teams to grow the Bayer staff; right down to the front line.

Alan's mission to create a more empowered and engaged organisation could be seen in a 22 percentile point increase in Self-Actualisation, which was now at the 78th percentile. Alan took particular satisfaction from this shift because it told him that he had unlocked a sense of passion and energy in the organisation. My own belief is that Alan's shift in his Self -Actualising impact also reflected a shift in his own level of passion and energy for the process we had embarked upon.

About two weeks after his remeasure, Alan came to our regular one-on-one with a visible sense of confidence and energy. I reflected this to him and he told me that's because he had come to a profound conclusion; that when the inevitable happened at Bayer, he wanted to pursue a career as a consultant in the space of leadership and culture. He didn't have to wait long.

3.2.15. A graceful exit

> I got the call in November from my 'very constructive' boss to say that my contract would not be renewed and that I should come to Germany in December to negotiate my exit. I have to say that I was more relieved than sad or angry.

Alan and I prepared for his last visit to headquarters not by trying to work out clever scripts to maximise his payout, but by role playing how to conduct this very difficult conversation in a Constructive way. We agreed that the outcome Alan wanted was to receive a fair settlement, and maintain his dignity and

integrity through the process. We explicitly excluded the use of yelling, arguing, punching, biting or sarcasm.

Somewhat ironically, Alan was going through his negotiations just as ANZ's full year forecasts were coming in showing that they had exceeded all financial targets for the third year in a row. Even though it was late at night, Alan called me immediately following the meeting with his boss since he knew I would be waiting with bated breath.

> The negotiation went pretty well. They committed to give me most of what I wanted and I behaved myself for most of it too. I confess that I had one lapse; when he started rubbishing our leadership work I told him that 'it was a pointless topic of conversation because he wouldn't know leadership if it fell out of a tree and hit him on the head'. I know it wasn't very constructive but it did feel pretty good.

As it turned out, the negotiations were only just beginning. I was surprised to learn from Alan that Bayer AG had sent down one of their internal auditors in January for the purposes of 'reviewing Alan's dealings as the CEO so that the settlement could be signed off'. It later became apparent that, in fact, this lady might actually be looking for some type of financial misappropriation that could be used against Alan in the final negotiations. I found this an extremely unsavoury practice; particularly for someone who had a 25 year history with the organisation.

I then got my very own experience with the head office culture Alan had described to me many times over the years; the auditor called me directly one morning in late January. In an aggressive and abrupt manner, she told me that she wanted to review the contracts between Bayer and my company. I told her that all of the contracts were kept by Alan's Executive Officer Vaughan, and that she was welcome to call me with any specific queries once she had reviewed them. She told me that I had an obligation to Bayer and insisted that she wanted to question me personally. I told her that Alan was my client, not her, that I was no longer contracted to Bayer anyway, and that I would not be meeting with her. She told me that she found my refusal unacceptable and that 'it would go on the file and look very bad for me'. By this I understood she meant that I would not be able to work with Bayer anymore. I thanked her for the charming conversation and hung up the phone with a whole new appreciation for the context in which Alan had conducted his leadership journey.

The auditor found nothing untoward during Alan's tenure as the CEO and he left the organisation in March with mixed emotions; satisfied with the results he had produced, proud of the difference he made to the local culture, but chastened somewhat by the behaviour of his superiors during his exit. Despite his detractors globally, Alan had won many fans at all levels of the organisation in Australia and New Zealand. At his farewell party, where more than a few tears were shed, I asked Alan to reflect on his time as the CEO in ANZ. His reaction says it all for me.

> Sometimes you feel like you go five steps forward and three steps sideways. Other days you will feel like you have gone ten steps backwards. I think there comes a point when you start to realise a change is happening. You don't suddenly wake up one morning and go 'my God, I have changed!' It is a journey. It doesn't end. You can't suddenly say 'I'm cured'.

As I reflect on Alan's comments above, it occurs to me that he really influenced my approach to leadership transformation; though Alan's experience, I began to see it as a journey rather than a program with a clear start and end date.

3.2.16. From darkness to light

When I asked Alan to reflect on his journey using a metaphor, he chose the idea of moving from darkness to light; another reference to the idea of gaining sight.

> At the beginning, it looks like stress, lack of direction, groping around in the dark. It's midnight, there's no moon, you're in a jungle, there are swamps around, you've got a rough idea of where you want to go but you've got no compass. To then, later in my journey, to understanding where you want to go, to the daylight where the sun is shining and you're feeling pretty damn good about yourself because you've put things in place. The biggest thing on this journey is, you move from not knowing to knowing about yourself, and it's the realisation on that journey that if you want change, the first things that's got to change is yourself. You've got to have a damn hard look at yourself. Standing outside of yourself and looking back at yourself as though you are seeing yourself replayed on video is very powerful. So the picture I paint is going from darkness into light. It sounds a bit over the top, but that's how I feel.

His metaphor also captures for me the sense of effort and drama that pervaded the early part of his journey, and the sense of lightness that he embraced toward the latter stages. Geoff really captures this sentiment in the passage below.

> The person you experience now when you deal with Alan is somebody who's infinitely more relaxed and at ease, and that sense of humour gets an opportunity to be out. He's much more in balance with his personal life, and he's probably more Self-Actualised. He's more at peace with himself in terms of the contribution he's making. He's pursuing what he wants to be pursuing -so a real sense of satisfaction there. In summary, a very different person today.

3.2.17. Epilogue

The first thing Alan did after he negotiated his exit from Bayer was to put himself through Human Synergistics accreditation; in fact, he became only the second CEO in Australia to achieve accreditation. Alan then set up his consulting company; Norvox, and stepped out in his own to start his new career at age 54.

I spent lots of time with Alan in those early days helping him plan a successful transition; mostly out of friendship but also a small sense of obligation. Alan had taken a very big gamble on me when I was an inexperienced 30 year old and I felt compelled to repay the faith. One of the first things I tried to prepare Alan for was the huge shift I thought he would experience moving from CEO to consultant. Alan had been a CEO for eight years and was used to people doing what he asked, whether he was particularly constructive or not. I warned Alan that, as a consultant, he would need to accept that he no longer had any formal authority whatsoever. In some ways, I told him, consulting would be the perfect test for his newly developed Constructive impact.

Alan's first couple of years as a consultant were quite challenging for him as he tried to find his niche in a crowded marketplace. As Alan connected with his unique value as a former CEO who had lived the journey, the demand for his services grew and his business is now very strong. More importantly, I have never seen him so fulfilled and happy in his work.

Alan and I have remained close and frequently share our respective experiences as change agents passionate about the leadership, culture and performance link. We both toasted with a glass of wine when, in 2005, Bayer Healthcare Australia achieved the award for being one of the top 10 employers in Australia. At that moment, Alan told me that he thought it was all worth it.

On a personal note, Alan now has all three of his kids together. Thomas and Erica, his two teenage children from his first marriage, moved from England to Australia and adore Ellie who is now seven years old. Barbeques at the McGilvray house are a lot of fun.

I am very grateful that Alan has been such a willing and engaged participant in this research study. The brutal honesty of his reflections, and his openness to my use of those reflections in his story, are signs for me of just how far his leadership journey has evolved.

Finally, I am very grateful to Alan for taking a punt on a 30 year old consultant with strong beliefs and not much more all those years ago. Many of the beliefs, insights and practices which I take for granted today were developed on the journey with Alan, and for that I'm eternally grateful.

3.2.18. Alan's reaction to reading his narrative

Peter called to let me know that the document-narrative- was on my email. It was a Friday afternoon. I'll be Joe cool and read it later ...well that didn't work! I had to read it and I did. First impression- heart in mouth oh my God I'm back there and this is happening...well I calmed down a tad and started to feel like I did when I went through some counselling.

This was a perfect description of me as I see it off the dance floor. Not only is it factually correct but it allowed me to relate to who I was then and not who I am now. That took a few moments to sink in. So I read it again and again and yes apart from a few minor changes it is spot on.

Reading it again I didn't transport myself back into the situation but rather stood off it and go "yeah!" However the big thing for me is this... I never for one moment thought that this process would have helped Peter so much. I kind of thought – "well he knows it all" – not in a big headed way but that was my perception.

I am stunned and delighted (at the same time – if that's possible) to know the extent that the interaction with me has helped Peter. I get a tad emotional when I reflect on this important point. Because it is important to me and makes me feel fulfilled.

3.3. NARRATIVE - MIKE SHOVE

3.3.1. Prologue

My journey was probably a fairytale. Look at the original Human Synergistics 360 feedback for me. It was a horror story. But to kind of go from ugly duckling to kind of swan if you will, was quite a remarkable change and I think that many people, including myself, weren't sure that I could even get there. So the success that I had, together with the team, over that period of three or four years was quite remarkable in terms of cultural change across the business, the teaming that was created from what was a pretty disparate group of strong willed individuals but not a team. And then we underpinned all of that with very strong financial results in what was a difficult economic climate with virtually no support from the rest of the corporation. My story was definitely a fairytale.

3.3.2. Be careful what you wish for

> Was I really capable of running an organisation of 4000 people worth hundreds of millions of dollars with virtually no guidance or direction from the corporation apart from 'deliver your numbers?' I felt ill equipped in those early months to run this business properly. So that is why I felt somewhat of an imposter in that role. But hey I got picked and I wasn't going to say no.

Imagine if you can that you have just been promoted to be the CEO and President of the Australian subsidiary of a massive multinational organisation. It's been your dream to ascend to a CEO role ever since you can remember, especially since you are following in the footsteps of your father who was the CEO and Chairman of a large British manufacturing organisation. You have been in leadership roles your whole life; from school prefect and captain of the hockey team, to a sales manager leading a team of people twice your age. And as you look around your office, you see a multitude of trophies and trinkets that testify to your numerous achievements in business.

This was the situation in which Mike Shove found himself when he was promoted to be the CEO and President of Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC) Australia; one of the world's largest IT services organisations, in late 2002. On closer inspection, however, Mike's credentials were stretched to cope with the top job, as he expresses in the opening quote. He has told me many times over the years that he wasn't comfortable with customers, and he felt awkward around staff. In his mind, he got the job because CSC was a financially driven company and he was extremely numerate and commercial. He would often boast in the early days that he could 'spot a mistake in an excel spreadsheet from fifty yards.' In my subsequent conversations with several of Mike's direct reports, they highlighted another factor that helped him get the top job; he 'managed up' very well with the outgoing CEO of CSC Australia. Unfortunately for Mike, his skills at managing up did not extend to his new global boss.

> My new boss took me aside and explained to me in very short syllables that 'we have gotten off to quite a bad start Mike'. I was six weeks into the job, the numbers were horrible, and my boss was questioning how I even got the job in the first place. I was pretty sure he didn't like me. So I thought to myself, 'what the hell do I do now?'

With his two primary assets of managing up and financial acumen in disarray, Mike felt disoriented and insecure in the CEO role.

> During those early months, it was difficult for the team because they had to second guess what I was guessing. So everyone was on tenterhooks as to what Shove was going to show up today, and I hadn't decided myself until I got in the room!

It is no surprise then that Mike's insecurities resulted in some very erratic leadership behaviour during his first few months in the CEO role.

I thought, 'ok, I will be the tough guy'. It is working for my boss; he is scaring the hell out of me. But that didn't work. So I said, 'ok, I will be the nice guy. Thank you for saying thank you. Oh, what a wonderful idea that is.' And that wasn't working either. I think I was guessing and making it up as I went along. I was a bit of a fake.

Aside from Mike's own recollections about his erratic behaviour, more than 20 of his global peers have recounted this erratic behaviour to me in some detail. Grant, Mike's head of strategy in Australia at the time and long time colleague, concurs with Mike's own observations of himself back at that time.

He would really flip-flop between being aggressive and passive. We weren't quite sure which Mike Shove was going to turn up. We weren't sure whether he was going to be the aggressive guy who tries to control everything myopically, or whether he would be the very passive quiet guy in the corner who provided no leadership and no direction.

I later discovered that by the time I met Mike in mid 2003, both he and his wider organisation were in a fairly significant downward spiral.

3.3.3. Enter the witch doctor

Tracey, my head of Human Resources, said 'I want to introduce you to someone who can help us, (pause), you.' By this point I am saying 'great, happy to meet Peter. I will try a witch doctor.' Anything to see what I could do to change this situation.

Tracey had heard Alan McGilvray, CEO of Bayer and my very first case study, speak at the 5th Australian Conference on Leadership and Culture. Tracey thought the parallels to Mike and CSC were uncanny and contacted me to arrange a meeting with her. I thought I was confident and charming in that first meeting. Tracey later told me that, in fact, she thought I was young and cocky, but that perhaps I could provide the jolt that Mike and the organisation needed to get them out of the rut they were in.

I have a vivid recollection of my first meeting with Mike. As I was ushered into his office, I shook hands with a man of average height and build with medium brown hair, and a thick Canadian accent. His most distinguishing physical feature was a thick moustache like the one my dad had in the seventies before my siblings and I made him shave it off. He did not smile when he shook my hand nor hold eye contact for very long. Most CEOs I had met to that point radiated some kind of presence. Mike just looked lost.

I am usually able to draw people into conversation fairly easily but the conversation with Mike felt very tense and stilted. He asked some thoughtful questions which to me revealed a serious intellect, but by and large, I felt like I could convince him to go down any path I wanted to.

At the time, Mike gave me a long list of reasons as to why CSC needed to embark on a change process. He told me that the big IT deals were drying up, that his competitors were strengthening, that his customers were increasingly sophisticated purchasers of IT, that his staff were disengaged from years of cost cutting, and that his executive team was dysfunctional. Much later, he confirmed what we both knew in that first meeting.

70% of my motivation to engage with you was in fact personal, and 30% of it was company driven. The need to change was really my personal imperative.

Based on my briefing from Tracey and my own experience in that first interaction, I was fairly certain that any turn around in CSC's fortunes would be contingent upon a shift in Mike's leadership. Consequently, I took some time to test Mike's commitment. I painted a very dire picture of what his feedback might look like. I told him that in order for me to engage with CSC and for the process to work, he would need to be prepared to accept his feedback and publicly commit to take action – no matter what it said.

I recommended that we start with a relatively short four month project to ensure we were a good fit for one another. The project was based around a Leadership/Impact agenda, including a 360 degree feedback assessment for Mike and his executive team. When Mike agreed to these principles, we formalised our engagement.

3.3.4. Printer problem

The temptation was to say 'it's wrong [Mike's Leadership/Impact data]. I've been a manager and an executive for 20 odd years. This is bullshit. They're wrong, I'm right, I'm in charge. Fire the bastards.'

Six weeks after my initial meeting with Mike, I received his Leadership/Impact feedback report in my office in time for the debrief workshop the following week. It is a moment I will never forget. As I turned to the page containing his *actual* impact data, my heart skipped a beat and my vision went blurry as though my brain could not calibrate the information my eyes were sending it. Mike had achieved a remarkable feat; he had scored an almost perfect Defensive impact of maximum red and green and almost zero blue. It was the single most Defensive measure of Leadership/Impact I had ever seen, and still holds this dubious honour today some seven years later. Mike's *ideal* impact was also unusually Defensive. I had seen a very Defensive *ideal* impact once before and I knew that challenging Mike on his *ideal* could be a very important step in helping him to develop a more Constructive impact in the months ahead. In lieu of his extraordinary *Actual* impact however, I decided that my primary goal was to prepare Mike to accept this very challenging data.

The day before the debrief workshop with Mike's executive team, I rang him to let him know that his feedback was even more Defensive than we had expected. It had been my experience that while CEOs did not like bad news, they liked surprises even less. I also told him that he had an unusually Defensive *ideal* profile that we needed to discuss further. I took the opportunity to remind him of three things we had agreed to during our contracting phase; the importance of our engagement for the turnaround of CSC, his commitment to be open and accepting of the feedback, and that the manner in which he received his feedback in front of his team was even more important than the feedback itself. I confess that these messages were partly for Mike's benefit and partly for mine. I was acutely aware that I would be the one delivering his feedback and I did not expect this to be a pleasant experience.

Two hours into the workshop, the moment arrived to hand out the Leadership/Impact feedback to all 13 members of the executive team. I always give people 15 minutes to process their data quietly, without discussion or interruption. That was about the longest 15 minutes of my life. At the same time as I

watched Mike turn the page to his impact feedback, I saw a red rash begin to work its way up his neck to his face. I was not the only one watching him and the silence in the room was deafening. After the fifteen minutes was up, I asked 'who would like to share their feedback?' Based on our contracting, Mike knew this was a rhetorical question. With a little hesitation, Mike stood up and said 'I've got a problem; I think the printer ran out of blue ink' as he simultaneously turned his folder toward the group to show his 'horrific' Circumplex (Figure 14). Two things happened in the room at that moment; one was a collective intake of breath, and the second one was a bout of nervous laughter. The thing I learnt about Mike in that moment was that he had an extremely powerful sense of humour. On reflection, I don't know how he could have survived those first few tumultuous months of his reign as CEO without it.

Mike's Ideal Impact
November 2003
L/I Ideal Impact (n=1)

Mike's Actual Impact
November 2003
L/I Actual Impact (n=7)
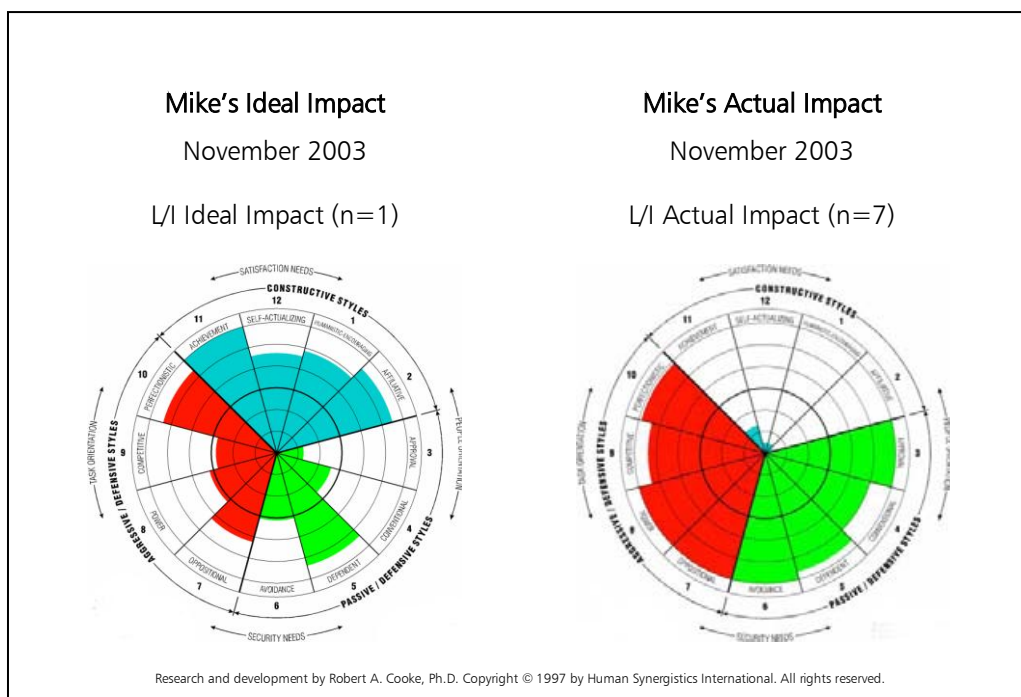
Figure 14: Mike's Ideal Impact data (2003) Vs Mike's Actual Impact data (2003)

At the end of the session, despite his apparent openness, I was unsure to what extent Mike had accepted his data. He did everything I asked of him but I suspected that he was struggling to internalise the brutality of his feedback. I didn't have to wait long to find out; our first one-on-one coaching session occurred at my office two weeks after Mike received his feedback. Once again, he did not smile when he shook my hand, and this time he barely made eye contact at all. As he sat down, I noticed the now familiar red rash beginning to creep up his neck before a word had barely been spoken.

I broke the ice by asking Mike how he was feeling about his feedback now that he had had two weeks to think about it. Mike responded by saying that he was thinking that he should just 'fire the bastards'. I now noticed the red rash overtaking Mike's face completely, but this was not the only sign that he was uncomfortable as he made this statement. I had been learning the pseudo-science of Neuro Linguistic

Programming (NLP) at this time and, according to the theory, Mike was displaying a real incongruence between his words and body language.

In the split second that followed I considered joining Mike in his nervous laughter but, being mindful of what was at stake for Mike and CSC, I decided to take a more direct approach than I had taken with a CEO previously. I told him that I did not believe he was genuine in his comment and that I wasn't buying the 'tough guy' persona he was trying to portray. He paused for a moment as though he were contemplating what to do next, and then, quite visibly, the tension appeared to leave his body. Even the rash began to dissipate.

In the two hours that followed, the tone of our conversation changed rather dramatically. We discussed his data very openly and also the origins of his very Defensive *ideal*. Mike put this down to two things; the norms and expectations of his up-line superiors, and the volatility of his first few months in the CEO role which had left him feeling rudderless. As the conversation progressed, we shifted our focus from Mike's Leadership/Impact data and his many problems, to a focus on how we could leverage his strengths of resilience, humour, and a calm temperament. Mike opened up on the vision he held for his leadership role speaking passionately about the legacy that he wanted to leave in CSC Australia of a growing organisation that people were proud of. He also talked about the importance of family to him. He wanted to ensure that he remained a good husband to his wife Kirsten, and a supportive father to his two teenage daughters. As Mike spoke about his family, he did so with a real nurturing sentiment.

Mike also shared with me what happened when he took his feedback home to show Kirsten.

> She looked at it and said 'blue is good right?' And I said 'Yes dear, blue is good.' Then she looked a bit more and she said 'actually that feels about right. You can be a real dickhead.'

Mike's recollection of Kirsten's reaction helped to further lighten the mood in our meeting and reinforce the messages that I was giving him. About thirty minutes into the conversation, his body language was open, and his eye contact was solid. We concluded the meeting with a shared sense of energy for the journey ahead.

Recently, Mike reflected on the internal struggle he was experiencing in that seminal meeting between he and I.

> I think it was that nervous reaction of 'shit, I don't know what to do.' I was absolutely struggling with what to say. How do you internalise and deal with that kind of feedback from people who were meant to be your subordinates? But I knew in my own mind and in my heart that that was not the right approach [firing the bastards] at all. It was a stupid thing to say.

Recently, Tracey was surprised to learn about the magnitude of Mike's internal struggle at this time.

> Mike used to joke about the fact that he could have just fired everybody and it wasn't until I heard him say it several years later at a conference, that I realised it actually was something he did contemplate!

At the time, I felt my confrontation with Mike was a big moment. Even though he expressed himself with humour, I sensed that he was trying to use positional power to deflect the stark reality staring him in the

face. In retrospect, I have come to understand just how big a moment this was. By rejecting his tough guy image, Mike was forced into a more authentic conversation and ultimately, to explore a new leadership identity for himself.

3.3.5. Putting leadership in a strategic context

> The process required me to have a degree of trust and faith. I think it helped that you had that credibility, history, and experience. Whether it was bullshit or not, you were able to convince me that you had done this 400 times, and it was absolutely the right thing to do. So I think I bought into that journey and then once we started to have some small and then significant success, it just became the way we did things.

My strong feeling at the time was that Mike was rudderless. There was no strategic direction coming from the corporate parent other than 'make your numbers' and CSC Australia lacked a coherent business strategy. Mike's role seemed to involve adjudicating disputes between the various business units, and even this proved problematic since Mike was very easily influenced in those early days. I was told by one of Mike's executive team members early on that if you want to know where Mike stands on a particular issue, 'just find out who was in his office last'.

I felt that we desperately needed to create some strategic content that Mike could use as a compass for his tenure as the CEO. He needed a strong story to tell the organisation and he needed agreed priorities to hold the executive team to account. Upon the conclusion of our first four month project, Mike and I agreed a more expansive partnership for the following twelve months. In essence, Mike's leadership journey was now wrapped in the executive team's parallel journey, and then the organisation's larger strategic journey. To cope with this serious increase in scope, I brought in Ron Schwartz, one of my Account Directors, to work with me at CSC.

> We were led by TAP down this fairly thorough approach that was kind of the intersection of the theory into practice. It was starting to bring some discipline back to the team. And I think we all were hungry for someone to help us through this. And a miracle happened, it worked.

The strategic content was built almost entirely through group consensus, which was slow and often painful. When the group required leadership, they would generally default to me. On the upside, the content which resulted had extremely high levels of ownership among the executive team.

> We did the hard work of being clear on our mission, vision, strategy and initiatives. We had put in the hard work of developing it. It wasn't just a random set of ideas, not only myself but the whole team could defend it.

Nonetheless, Tracey and I spoke extensively about the importance of making Mike the face of the strategic content to the organisation. As a result, the Communications Department organised a series of road shows that saw Mike present to almost all 4,000 CSC Australia staff, across 20 sites nationally, over a period of three weeks.

While the articulated purpose of the road shows was to engage CSC's staff in the newly developed strategy, it also served to introduce Mike to the organisation; especially since he had spent most of his

time to that point in his office. Much to the surprise of many, including Mike, he was actually pretty good at engaging with the staff. In the feedback sheets, people appreciated his honesty, sense of humour, and thoughtful communication style.

> I enjoy telling stories, whether I tell stories about myself good or bad. I find that a very useful way to get the message across.

I saw him conduct three of these road shows in Sydney and he really challenged my beliefs about what makes for compelling communication. To that point, I had favoured slick presentations and clever one-liners when coaching CEOs to present. Watching Mike's less polished, narrative driven approach really shifted my thinking, and I whole heartedly promote this method today as a way to connect with staff that are cynical of perfectly rehearsed presentations. Mike repeated a version of these road shows every year of his tenure as CEO. The staff feedback was always very positive and the employee engagement scores rose every year during this period. In my conversations with Mike since, he sees this first series of road shows as having helped him begin to grow into the CEO role.

As he travelled the country meeting all 4,000 staff, people were able to put a face to Mike's name for the first time. The challenge for Mike was to do the same back, particularly since he leaned more naturally toward the task versus the people dimension, as illustrated in his Leadership/Impact data. At the inspiration of his wife, Kirsten, Mike came up with a novel solution to this problem.

> I tasked someone to get me photographs of the top ten percent of the company, so about 450 people. And I took the photograph, their name and their title and then I went about memorising them. It was great because then I would meet people and say 'hi John. How are you? How is the data centre?' It blew them away. But it actually helped me enormously to connect with the staff.

For my part, I was impressed with the progress Mike was making, but conscious to stay very close to him as he explored this new territory.

3.3.6. The support team

> Certainly Peter you played probably the biggest role in my personal journey. I think your role was critical in several aspects. One was the structure, frameworks and process to keep it front of mind. But your values were things that I aspired to and that helped me crystallise my values in my own mind. So don't underestimate the influence that you had in taking me on that journey, certainly in the early months and years.

I was mindful of the importance of my role in Mike's journey, particularly in the first two years. Mike had placed an enormous amount of trust and faith in me and I was conscious not to be seen to be exploiting this trust in the eyes of his colleagues. The way I managed this tension was twofold. With Mike, I would go out of my way to demonstrate respect for his leadership and encourage him to invite my commentary rather than assume he wanted it; this was particularly true in public forums. Whenever I was engaged with a member of the executive team or the next level down in the organisation, I would use the opportunity to build empathy for Mike and deflect any credit to him that would come my way. Ron also became extremely skilled at this strategy as we deepened our engagement with CSC to multiple levels of

management in the following years. In essence, we were buying time until Mike's leadership caught up with the stature demanded by the CEO role in CSC at that time.

My support for Mike was supplemented by key members of his executive team. In the early days, this was predominantly Tracey and Grant though this support network grew over time. I observed these executives provide a shield for Mike when it may have been easier to join the detractors in undermining him. In my opinion, I think this support was extended partly because they genuinely liked Mike and partly because they felt they could not be successful unless he was. Grant's observations of Mike at this time reflect his growing confidence and a new found sense of openness.

> I think he took on board the coaching and support and grew in confidence, we saw that. He started to move from an introvert to, not an extrovert, but a far more comfortable introvert – public speaking, getting out on the road, talking to the staff. And what I saw, as he grew in confidence, was that he opened himself even further, exposing his personal side to us, which was pretty much an unknown in the early days.

Mike's exposure of his personal life to the executive team was a deliberate strategy from our one-on-one coaching to make Mike more human and accessible. On the back of his first Leadership/Impact measure, he had been given feedback that the team found him cold and distant. Unbeknown to them, Mike had been playing this role because that's what he thought CEOs should do. Opening himself up more personally proved to be far more natural for Mike and both of us were taken aback by how positively this was received by the executive team and the broader organisation.

Mike's wife Kirsten reinforced the messages Mike was getting from me and the executive team. I met Kirsten for the first time in late 2003 and we have interacted socially dozens of times since then. Kirsten is a formidable executive in her own right having been a Director at Microsoft, among other large companies.

> She knows me better than anyone in the world but was also an executive in her own right. She is a very different leader in her approach and has fascinating success. Whereas I would tell her she needs to be tougher she goes 'nope, I can be very successful without doing that.' And I saw that evidenced, so that was kind of reinforcing and I thought well maybe there is a different, better way.

Mike and I have discussed the importance of Kirsten's role in his leadership journey many times over the years. In addition to her wicked sense of humour, which helped to keep Mike grounded and humble, her own leadership style modelled and reinforced what Mike aspired to.

3.3.7. <u>Finding his voice</u>

> My boss didn't like the numbers but he liked the review. He said, 'Well I don't like your proposal or your budget submission but I get it. I understand where you are and why you are where you are.'

I observed Mike apply his new found clarity of strategic direction and skill of storytelling to his most important challenge of all; negotiating a fair and reasonable budget with his boss. This was a particularly significant moment considering Mike's disastrous first interaction with his boss on the numbers, but this wasn't the only pressure.

CSC Australia failed to make its numbers in Mike's first full year as CEO; a potentially fatal problem in a very numbers-driven organisation. On the back of the road shows, Mike and the executive team were aware that the organisation was lacking a sense of self-belief after several tough years. Mike had just completed the road shows where he personally engaged the bulk of his 4,000 staff in his commitment to become a more Constructive leader. My belief at the time was that Mike's credibility and survival as CEO were at stake in the 2005 financial year.

In conversation with Mike and several of his executive team members over the years, we have come to a shared view that the 2005 budget cycle represented more than just getting an achievable budget. Mike's success resulted in a dramatic increase in his leadership stature, a boost to his self confidence in the CEO role, and a turning point in his leadership journey. In order to preserve his leadership agenda in challenging financial circumstances, Mike chose not to engage anyone in headquarters. Mike knew that what they were interested in was the financials, and he astutely kept his conversations focused only on that agenda.

Mike's success in negotiating a fair and reasonable budget was not lost on his team as Tracey expresses below.

> The leader has to occupy a space that no-one else can occupy. If they're not doing their job, there's no one else that can do it and that is one of the most important things that Mike did. He put his own personal credibility on the line and used his skills of managing up to buy us, what actually ended up being three good budgets in a row. But that first budget was very important.

In addition to Mike's new found confidence managing up, he was beginning to exhibit a greater level of decisiveness in leading the executive team. As part of our work developing strategic content for CSC Australia, the executive team now had a set of shared standards of behaviour to which they had all committed. In the previous year, whenever we discussed an individual who was misaligned, Mike would default to giving them more time or trying to coach them into alignment, in spite of my provocations to act more decisively. In Mike's second year, I noticed that his tone shifted quite notably and he began to openly articulate his determination to build a more cohesive and collaborative team of aligned supporters. Grant's reflections below illustrate how the standards became a vehicle for Mike to demonstrate his leadership.

> The standards really broke through some of the relationship issues. It took courage for Mike to create an environment where standards were as important as performance. That gave us real licence then to hold people to account, and some people did not last the distance.

Mike had four direct reports who had been overtly or covertly operating outside of the team standards and undermining his leadership over the previous months. Within the next twelve months, three of those four direct reports had left CSC; one of his own volition and two at Mike's initiation. All three roles were filled very thoughtfully with internal candidates who more closely modelled the standards that Mike espoused. The exit of one particularly powerful and abrasive executive sent a very strong message to the organisation about what Mike now expected from the executive team.

The only downside of Mike's strong hand with the executive team was that he stopped short of removing the fourth problem executive; let's call him Ray. Ray was openly misaligned with the standards, but was responsible for 50% of CSC Australia's revenue and the only executive consistently delivering his numbers. The issue was compounded by the fact that Ray had been hired by Mike on the back of a very long personal and professional history, and had once been Mike's boss at a previous organisation. My belief at the time was that in addition to the financial ramifications, Mike failed to act because he had not yet completely understood that behaving constructively included making tough decisions.

3.3.8. It should be more blue

> I was all excited about the remeasure of my Leadership/Impact, until I saw the result. I thought that's not great. It should all be blue, everyone likes me.

After his first very challenging measure of Leadership/Impact in 2003, Mike would pester me on a regular basis about when he could remeasure. Though he had come to accept his first measure, he made no secret of his desire to leave it behind. I would remind Mike quite regularly that we were not engaged in a sprint but a marathon. Furthermore, I told him that Leadership/Impact was just one measure, among many, and that we should keep it in perspective.

We agreed to remeasure in late 2005. By this point, the organisation had posted several good quarters of financial performance and Ron and I felt that the mood was beginning to shift in the executive team and the broader organisation. We could smell a sense of hope in the air.

As much as I tried to down play the significance of Mike's remeasure, I began holding my breath several weeks before the data came in. At the time, I sensed that Mike, the executive team and all the staff who had seen Mike's first measure were also holding their breath. Mike had invested enormously in this process; not just significant sums of CSC's money but his own time, energy and emotional commitment. We had all witnessed him very humbly expose himself to 4,000 staff and build a story for them that connected a change in Leadership/Impact with a change in CSC's fortunes. Even more importantly, Mike was now holding his most senior leaders accountable for their standards of behaviour, not just their financial performance. I remember feeling at the time that a lack of movement in his own data would have made him look like a hypocrite.

When I finally saw the data (Figure 15), I was delighted. While Mike's profile was still predominantly red and green, he had achieved marked positive shifts in all twelve styles. For example, his Achievement impact increased fivefold while his Conventional impact halved. In my experience, this was a big shift and something to be very proud of. As evidenced by Mike's quote above, however, he was less enthusiastic.

I believe there are two significant lessons embedded in Mike's reaction. The first is that Circumplex data is subject to the psychological filters of the individual. I have seen some leaders look at their remeasure data and smile at the smallest Constructive increase while they ignore the horror story staring them in the face. I have seen other leaders ignore significant positive shifts in 11 out of 12 styles because they are fixated

on the one style hasn't moved in the right direction. At the time, I put Mike squarely in the second camp, and his initial reaction to his data is symptomatic of a perfectionistic mindset.

Mike's Actual Impact
November 2003
L/I Actual Impact (n=7)

Mike's Actual Impact
September 2005
L/I Actual Impact (n=7)
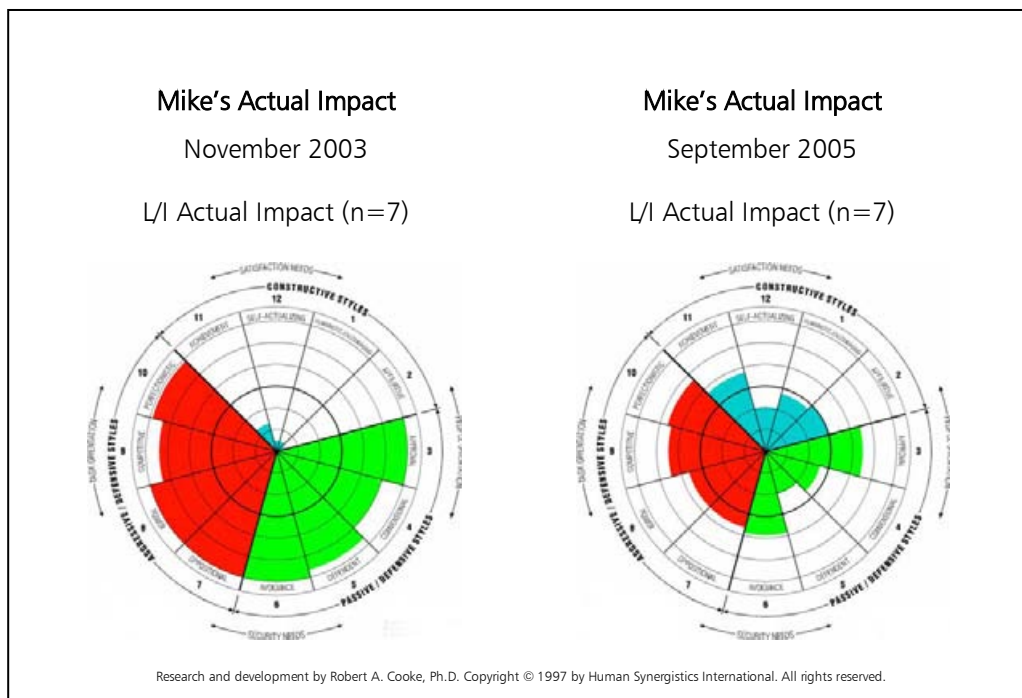
Figure 15: Mike's Actual Impact data (2003) Vs Mike's Actual Impact data (2005)

The second lesson is that no matter how often we repeat the mantra that 'being blue does not mean being nice', it usually takes leaders some time to internalise this message. Mike was no exception.

> You explained to me that you don't go through green [Passive Defensive] to get to blue [Constructive]. But you did say, as I better understood the tool and the impact I was having, that all twelve of those styles had dramatically shifted. The good news was that we had finally put blue ink in the printer!

In our subsequent conversations, Mike came to the conclusion that his data was a fair reflection of where he was at; on the right trajectory but still with lots of work to do. The same was true for the executive team's collective feedback, though Ray was still not making any progress; either in his data or commitment. For my part, I walked away from the debrief with the determination to help Mike confront the one remaining elephant in the room.

3.3.9. The moment of truth

> We have standards in the organisation but we are a numbers-driven company. Ray was absolutely getting results; the business was turning around and we were hitting our numbers. I was getting the accolades for that success, but gosh did we have a trail of blood. So I agonised for quite a long time about what to do about Ray.

I remember the one-on-one session where Mike told me he was about to take action on Ray. It was almost three years after Mike became the CEO and over two years since we had our first conversation about Ray's poor impact on the organisation.

I believe it took Mike this long to come to the conclusion many others had arrived at very quickly because he was infinitely pragmatic, not because he was afraid. In my conversations with Mike, he would tell me that Ray's financial contribution was one of the key reasons he had survived as the CEO. He also reminded me that without the financial performance emanating from Ray's group, he would not be able to fund the large change agenda we were engaged in. Ray would probably have found this notion highly ironic.

As Mike recalls below, he was genuinely surprised at the impact of Ray's departure.

> I was absolutely amazed at the impact that had across the organisation. It rippled through the organisation very, very quickly. And I am pleased to say we continued to hit our numbers, the business didn't even miss a beat, it continued to grow.

Unlike Mike, I was not entirely surprised by the impact this decision had on CSC as I had seen similar scenarios play out before in other organisations. By exiting his best financial performer, Mike had sent a big symbol to the organisation about his commitment to the principles of Constructive leadership.

> Historically that was always our golden rule, make your numbers and then you're fine, you were never under any threat, but now it's not enough – making your numbers is almost a given. Now it's also live the values that we have. We as a collective team expect it of people.

The symbolism of Ray's exit was further increased by Mike's succession plan. Several of the appointments Mike made were not obvious choices, yet most turned out to be very successful. He moved his Chief Financial Officer (CFO) into the lead sales role and promoted a Director of Account Management into the CFO role.

> It was having the courage to do it, to take these strong-willed people out of the organisation. The fact that I could then pick other individuals to step up into those roles, they weren't necessarily proven at that level, but I was genuinely pleased that they all stepped up to the mark and filled the gap very quickly.

In one fell swoop, I observed Mike send powerful messages about what it meant to be a leader at CSC, the career opportunities available to Constructive leaders, and his willingness to take risks on senior appointments. Tracey's quote below highlights Mike's increasing stature with his team and the broader organisation.

> I think he made some tough choices along the way about who should be in that team, and who shouldn't be in that team, and I think he made some appointments that people might have questioned that have turned out to be good. I think it gave him more credibility in the eyes of the broader company.

At the time, I got the sense that Mike was getting more and more confident in his key leadership decisions. He was certainly far less reliant on me for guidance and direction. My role as coach became more one of maintenance and sounding board rather than provocateur. On reflection, I believe this was the period where he was really beginning to internalise the concepts he had been systematically learning for the months and years before.

In our conversations since this time, Mike and I have talked many times about how critical his executive appointments were; both who and how, for his leadership journey. Until these decisions, Mike was primarily a consensus driven leader. As a regular observer of executive team meetings, he looked to be a peer of the executive team members, rather than their CEO. Following these people decisions, I observed a growing gap in the stature of Mike versus his executive team members; he was clearly the leader now.

3.3.10. The double edged sword of autonomy and accountability

> I started to micromanage people much less. I hired good strong individuals but at the same time had the discipline to meet them on a regular basis one-on-one so that I felt directionally things were going where I wanted them to go. I think that has been a big learning. Being able to give people feedback, influence them on where we are going, and then measure their outcomes.

In the early days, a meeting with Mike would be extremely uncomfortable and involving lots of poking. Mike would dive down into minute detail, offer little support, but was quick to blame and criticise when expectations were not met. In the latter part of his leadership journey, he worked hard at balancing autonomy with accountability. This meant clarifying outcomes, offering whatever support was required, and then trusting people to get on with the job. Tracey expresses this sentiment below.

> I felt in working for him, I had lots of space, and it was fantastic. I felt supported in having that autonomy and that space.

My observation at the time was that the penny was finally dropping for Mike; he was developing a stronger understanding of what it meant to be a Constructive leader. Not the aggression he was used to, but the quiet and deliberate achievement that Mike, himself was beginning to model very astutely.

I observed Mike extend his impact beyond the executive team and to the wider organisation in an effort to create leadership at all levels of the organisation. Grant captures this shift below.

> Mike delegated responsibility for key strategic initiatives to the Senior Leaders Group (SLG). That was a demonstration of trust to the organisation but I think it actually helped him to redefine what success meant; success wasn't just about numbers, it was actually about bringing people along on that journey.

The Senior Leadership Group was something that we debated with the executive team at length. Firstly, the very concept of a group of leaders one level below the executive team, with delegated authority to spend two million dollars on the organisation's most strategic activity, was a foreign concept to an organisation with a heritage of command and control. Mike's commitment to this group and what it represented was put to the test repeatedly in the first year of its operation. When we proposed the idea to Mike and the executive team, there were several members of the team who were very nervous about giving over this kind of authority. Mike reinforced one of the executive team's standards about 'giving people the benefit of the doubt' and reminded them about their shared desire to spend more time on strategy development, rather than execution, as well as their commitment to leadership succession.

Ron and I proposed to the executive team that membership of the Senior Leadership Group should constitute the best and brightest no matter where they were from, not the usual CSC approach of

inclusion by representation and seniority. When some members of the team resisted, Mike reminded the team of their desire to build an Achievement-oriented culture not one based on Avoidance and Approval.

Finally, when the revised 2006 mid-year forecast showed a two-million dollar short fall against profit expectations, several members of the executive team favoured freezing the Senior Leadership Group's budget. Ron told me that the Senior Leadership Group members fully expected their budget to be taken away when they heard of the profit shortfall. Once again, Mike held his line. He reminded the group that the seven strategic initiatives were the future growth engine of the company and they would need to find the two million dollars somewhere else.

Incidentally, the two-million dollar shortfall was recovered through eliminating unnecessary travel and some other non-strategic expenses. Despite this, the Senior Leadership Group only spent a fraction of their allocated budget in their first year of operation. It was as though they were expecting it to be taken away right up until the last minute. Mike told the Senior Leadership Group he was not happy with their failure to use the allocated funds and that the pot would disappear if they did not spend it next year. The Senior Leadership Group did not need to be told twice and the money was spent in year two.

Mike began to see his vision of a more distributed form of leadership take hold even deeper in the organisation.

> I remember going down for coffee one day and this young graduate recruit comes up to me in the coffee queue and says, 'Mike, you know that presentation you did for the staff last week, well yeah, not great. I think we could change some of the direction.' And I am going 'hang on, three years earlier you wouldn't have even found my office, let alone give me feedback in the coffee line'. But this was very much what we were looking for. We were getting engagement at the staff level.

I know the story above well because I was standing in the coffee line with Mike when it happened. Not only did Mike respond very humbly and generously to this young lady, but he tagged her with Human Resources and had her fast tracked into a bigger role shortly after.

3.3.11. Inspiring others

> Our global Presidents would come to Australia and say 'it feels different. I don't know what you are doing but it feels different down here.' People wanted to know how we were doing it.

By the end of the 2007 financial year, CSC Australia had achieved four consecutive 'Eagle Awards.' Eagle Awards are presented by the global CEO of CSC at an annual senior leadership conference for achievement of all financial targets. In a very financially-driven organisation, these awards represent the ultimate currency. It has often been said to me that people would kill to receive even one of these awards, and they say it with a straight face. To receive four in a row is extremely rare, hence the interest from Mike's global peer group.

Despite the excitement around CSC Australia's financial performance, this was just a lagging measure of many other positive shifts that we were witnessing in the organisation. All twelve of CSC Australia's largest customers were now so satisfied with the service they received that they were prepared to be

'referenced' publicly. Internal culture scores shifted very positively over this period whilst staff attrition rates dropped significantly. CSC Australia was also recognised externally with prestigious awards for customer service and people practices. In fact, the only tangible measurement of change that was missing by that stage was a documented Constructive Leadership/Impact profile for Mike. It was my strong sense that Mike had shifted to a predominantly Constructive impact, but a formal remeasure was not scheduled until later in the year.

Regardless, I thought Mike's story would be inspirational to other leaders and asked Mike to tell it at one of my CEO 'think tank' sessions; a forum of 20 CEOs from my network who came together quarterly to discuss management trends and challenges. Mike rose to the challenge.

> Whether I was talking internally or externally I would try to take the same humbling, self effacing approach – warts and all. I think it makes an enormous difference if you are not an impostor, if you genuinely believe it, if you talk about the journey, the vision, the direction you are taking the organisation with real passion. I don't think you can fake this stuff.

I thought he would be good, I didn't realise how good. The audience was struck by the content and the delivery. I remember chuckling to myself at the time as I reflected back on Mike's introduction to this group some four years earlier. While the other 19 members were on their feet engaging in the usual welcome banter, Mike remained seated and well hidden behind a copy of the Financial Review.

In the audience to hear Mike's story that day was Quentin Jones, Managing Director of Human Synergistics Australia. He was so compelled by Mike's story that he asked Mike to speak at the 9th Australian Conference on Leadership and Culture; Australia's most prestigious conference of its kind. Despite the fact Mike's personal leadership data was still Defensive based on his 2005 measure; he put it up on a 30 foot screen in front of 3,000 strangers. Mike spoke with such humility and generosity that people were visibly moved by his story and I think it motivated Mike to keep going on his journey.

> Confidence and momentum are fascinating things. Some of it's deserved some of it not, but you take it anyway. And that helps fuel the success that you've had.

Mike's journey seemed to come full circle when, four years after his first terrible encounter with his new boss at CSC's annual senior leadership conference, that same boss asked Mike to present his story of personal and organisational transformation to the 150 most senior managers in CSC globally. I have been told by people who were in the room that day that Mike received a standing ovation.

3.3.12. Ugly duckling becomes a swan

> It gave me goose bumps; it was super to see the shift in my impact. What was very gratifying for me personally was that the executive team members that had given me that very direct, brutal feedback in 2003 were still in the organisation giving me this feedback in 2008.

In early 2008, on the back of four consecutive years of exceptional financial performance, Mike was promoted to the role of President of CSC Asia. His last order of business before heading up there was to complete a third measure of his Leadership/Impact. As we had ended our formal partnership only a few months earlier, he asked his Human Resources team to organise the measure.

Knowing that I was a keen stakeholder in the result, the Vice President of HR called me up to tell me what the data said; a stunning picture of Constructive leadership (Figure 16). In fact, Mike's data put him in the top five percent of all leaders in the Human Synergistics Leadership/Impact data base; a stunning reversal from the first measure which put him in the bottom five percent.

Mike's Actual Impact
November 2003
L/I Actual Impact (n=7)

Mike's Actual Impact
September 2005
L/I Actual Impact (n=7)

Mike's Actual Impact
January 2008
L/I Actual Impact (n=7)
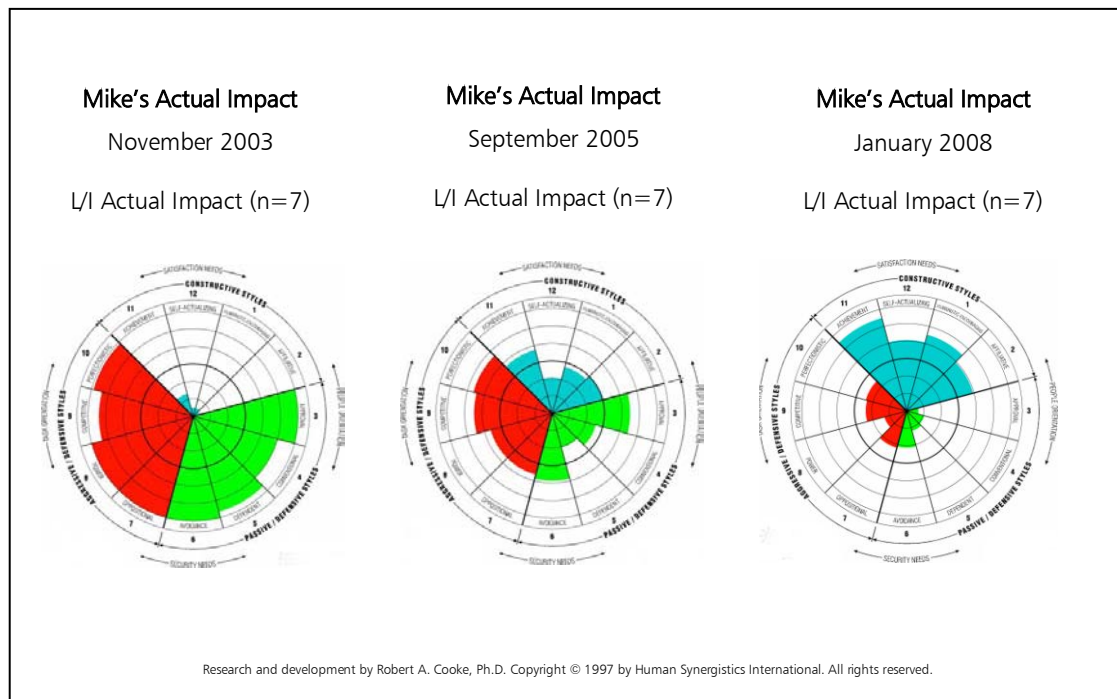
Figure 16: Mike's Actual Impact data (2003) Vs (2005) Vs (2008)

Even more gratifying for me was that this phone call was followed shortly by an email from Mike in Singapore which was simply titled 'the ugly duckling has become a swan'. There were no other words, just his new Circumplex attached. End of discussion. I asked Mike to reflect on that email recently.

> I can look back now and joke about my initial Human Synergistics feedback. It was some of the worst results that they had seen in the history of CEOs. The change and transformation journey I went on was very satisfying and gratifying. The change I saw in front of me was more than statistically significant, it was visually significant. And the positive feedback I have had since; lots of people saying they were genuinely surprised I was able to make that change as a person. So that is why it feels like ugly duckling to swan.

I remember thinking that it was a very interesting way for Mike to think about his own journey; it's very much his sense of humour. However, from where I stood, it wasn't so much the ugly duckling becoming a swan, but more about the swan learning to fly.

3.3.13. Epilogue

At the time of writing this narrative, Mike and CSC Asia had just received their second straight Eagle Award; an achievement that meant six Eagles in a row for Mike. Importantly, CSC Australia achieved its Eagle in the year after Mike left for Asia suggesting that the change in trajectory he created whilst there remains sustainable beyond his tenure.

Mike and I remained close after he left for Singapore. In fact, I often joked with him that we spoke more after he left than when he was in Australia. In early 2009 we agreed to engage in a very large alignment process for CSC Asia taking in Singapore, Japan, China, Malaysia and Hong Kong, as well as three vertical lines of business.

I have long said to Mike that he is a master of managing expectations; his ability to consistently get fair and reasonable budgets is evidence of this. Mike has often said to me that I should be teaching how to sell for a living. As a result, our mutual acknowledgement of each other's core competencies has made it very interesting whenever a contract negotiation between Mike and I rolls around. In some ways, this mutual respect has pushed the trust between us to extreme levels.

In September 2009, Mike and I shared stages in Melbourne, Sydney and Perth for the 11th Australian Conference on Leadership and Culture where we addressed several thousand executives. It was a real joy for me to see Mike complete this chapter of his journey in such a significant way. As usual, he stole the show with his trademark humility, self effacing sense of humour, and absolute willingness to give everything to an audience. The fact that he took a whole week out of his diary in Asia to fly with me around Australia is symptomatic of his generosity of spirit and his desire to leave a leadership legacy. Mike's presentation at this conference is included in this doctoral submission as *Appendix F – DVD of CEO Presentations*.

On a personal note, Mike looks happier and healthier than he has ever been. Kirsten decided to resign her executive position so that she and Mike can make the most of their time together in Asia and also travel around the world together. I regularly have dinner with them in the various locations we find ourselves in and Mike jokes openly about how Kirsten has gone from being a revenue stream to a cost centre.

With Mike's sponsorship, my organisation is now engaged at the highest levels of CSC globally. As a consequence, our relationship has come full circle and I regularly seek out advice and counsel from Mike on how to best navigate this environment. It has also been very gratifying to witness the esteem Mike is held in by his superiors in America. We often reminisce about just how far we have come together and just how intimately our journeys are intertwined.

For my part, this was an extremely challenging and pain staking narrative to write because I wanted to do justice to Mike's journey. I hope Mike's humility, sense of humour and authenticity have come through this narrative as much as I experienced them over the past seven years.

3.3.14. <u>Mike's reaction to reading his narrative</u>

My narrative is brutally honest, very confronting and deadly accurate. It was quite sobering for me to reflect on the entirety of my journey and put it all into context. I have a renewed sense for how far I have come on the journey, for the vastly increased maturity of my organisation, and myself as a leader.

I have to say, it gave me some very horrible flashbacks – I'm glad that terrible early period is behind me. The narrative really reaffirmed for me what I have learned over the last six years. It is a great vehicle to reinforce the changes I have made and to help keep me on track. It also gives me a sense that there is still lots to do, lots more for me to learn, and that this journey never ends.

3.4. NARRATIVE – JIM VARGHESE

3.4.1. Prologue

My story has been an epic narrative of triumph over amazing twists and turns. It is a story of passion, persistence and profound belief that every facet of my life has a profound purpose and meaning in the context of the positive intention of the universe. It is an epic narrative of channelling and focussing positive energy and consciousness against a backdrop of negative energy - of affirming my inner purpose and not succumbing to the profane.

3.4.2. A man of contradictions

> I was trained and bred in the Victorian public service. We were the SAS of the public sector. We were one frame managers; command and control. Deliver the outcomes, or else get out of the way. It didn't matter who got in the way, you just got rid of them. I did very well under that structure. I always got the top performance pay... people were less important than the results.

Though I have known Jim Varghese for ten years, I have never known the man he describes above. In this quote, Jim is reflecting on his early career in the Victorian public sector covering the years 1975-1990. I believe this context is important for Jim's leadership journey because meeting him today belies his very authoritarian beginnings and emphasises both the extent and duration of his leadership transformation.

I met Jim in 2001 when he was Director General of Education in the Queensland Government (EQ); a decade after he left the Victorian public sector. The meeting was set up by a fellow consultant based in Brisbane, Mel Cowan. The basis for the meeting was that Jim had an agenda to revolutionise a government department that was in disarray, as he recounts below.

> When I took over this job from my predecessor I inherited a serious challenge. Not only were the teachers on strike but I inherited a 150 million dollar deficit.

Mel and Jim had a very long history beginning with attending the same school and developing a strong friendship over two decades. Their professional history included Mel working with Jim in the Queensland Public Service, first as a staff member and later as an external consultant. With his insight into Jim's personal and professional life, Mel felt that Jim's agenda was far too big for him to handle alone. While I was not very excited about engaging with a government bureaucracy, I agreed to meet with Jim partly as a favour to Mel but also because Jim had a big reputation as a successful change agent within this bureaucracy.

Within one hour of meeting Jim he shattered every preconception I held about public sector leadership. The first thing I noticed about him was an apparent mix of contradictions; he was a senior public servant, of Indian heritage, wearing a quirky burgundy bow-tie. While most people struggle to make a bow-tie work during business hours, Jim seemed to pull it off with ease. It gave him an air of eccentric sophistication and peaked my interest to get to know him better.

Jim was not big in stature, but he radiated enormous presence. As we began conversing over lunch in the Rocks district of Sydney, I was struck by the intensity of Jim's focus and attention. I experienced him as having that rare ability, often ascribed to charismatic figures like Bill Clinton, to make you feel as though you are the most important thing in his world at that time. I was also impressed with Jim's commercially-minded dialogue; it did not fit with my preconceived notions about career public servants. But what I remember most about that first interaction was the warmth and intensity of Jim's laughter. Jim had a laugh that started deep in his belly and burst forward like a tsunami collecting everything in its path. I experienced it as a laugh so genuine and warm that he made me feel like an old friend.

My interest only increased as our first conversation rollicked through a wide range of topics, from history and philosophy to politics and spirituality; Jim is part of an ancient Catholic community that's existed in

India since the first Century. In fact, Jim spoke about his spiritual beliefs with such a compelling combination of intellect, conviction and joy that I actually considered going back to church. Truth be told, that first meeting with Jim encouraged in me equal parts of excitement and insecurity; I was excited by the opportunity to work with such an accomplished and engaging person but insecure in my own ability to add value to him.

As we landed on a shared passion for leadership and management, I found my footing again in the conversation. I started to see a person behind the big reputation and huge aura. Jim advocated his management philosophies so hard that I suspected he may be trying to convince himself, as well as me. It wasn't until much later that I came to understand he was still experimenting with his management philosophies at this time, and since I had been positioned to him as a management expert, he may have been looking for my approval.

Both Jim and I felt intuitively that we were a good fit with one another and we ended our meeting by agreeing to explore a partnership more formally. Despite this positive sentiment, we did not in fact engage formally with one another until 2003, almost two years later. Furthermore, we did not engage formally on a Leadership/Impact agenda until 2006, five years after the meeting described above. However, it is my contention that Jim had begun a leadership journey of sorts in 1991 and I believe this history is important in the context of Jim's ultimate transformation. As a consequence, I will now wind back the clock to 1991 to shed light on the decade of Jim's leadership journey before he and I met. In addition to Jim's insights, I draw upon the recollections of three people who were very close to him during this period in order to tell his story. These three people are Mel and two long serving colleagues of Jim's in the Queensland Public Sector, Marie and Jill.

3.4.3. Authoritarian beginnings

> When the [Life Styles Inventory] results came in I was shocked...and I wanted to kill the bastards that had actually filled in the questionnaire. I wanted to know who they were! That was my first reaction...I responded entirely as you would predict.

When Jim accepted his role as Executive Director of Queensland's Department of Primary Industries (DPI) in 1991, he underwent his first 360 degree leadership assessment. This assessment was a department-wide initiative which used a Human Synergistics instrument called the Life Styles Inventory. While the Life Styles Inventory uses the same Circumplex as the Leadership/Impact to graph its results, it is focused on how a leader is perceived to behave rather than how a leader motivates and encourages others to behave. We do not have a copy of Jim's first measure, because Human Synergistics' electronic data base does not stretch back to 1991. We do however, have very strong agreement among the four people interviewed for this narrative about what it looked like, and each confirmed Jim's recollection below.

> My first Life Styles Inventory was over 90% red! There was very little blue and not much green. It was a very aggressive profile.

When Jim says that he responded 'entirely as you would predict' he is using irony to draw a connection between his very aggressive response of 'kill the bastards' and his actual Life Styles Inventory data from

1991, which was dominated by the four task-oriented, Aggressive-Defensive styles; namely, Opposition, Power, Competitive and Perfectionism. Jim explains below how he processed his feedback.

> My reaction to the tool was first one of hostility and then one of ridicule. I thought it was just another management fad and fairly useless.

Despite Jim's hostility and ridicule, he had little choice but to show that he was on board with the Life Styles Inventory program initiated by the Director General (DG) of DPI. Jim has expressed to me that even though he was not a big believer in the Human Synergistics methodology at this early point in his leadership journey, he needed to give the appearance of commitment to the Life Styles Inventory program if he wanted to progress in his career. Mel reflects on the discussions which forced Jim to pay attention to his Life Styles Inventory data.

> I think the Life Styles Inventory was a huge shock to Jim. I remember him having very significant discussions with the DG who provided Jim the advice that basically, 'this is going to hold you back'; that 'what's got you here is not going to take you forward'. Jim had an aspiration of being a DG, and there were things he needed to change.

By his own admission, he paid it 'lip service' and little more. As Mel recalls below, Jim was still trying to get things done using his old mode of operating even though his DG was trying to promote a more Constructive culture in DPI.

> He'd come from a very aggressive culture that had existed in Victoria, where he had to fight and battle his way to get to the top...he'd been very successful. He tried that when he came to Queensland and it didn't work so well.

Jim's aggressive approach didn't win him many friends in the department and this made him very vulnerable to the change of government in Queensland in 1993.

3.4.4. It was the worst of times; it was the best of times

> When the change in government took place I suddenly found myself on a secret hit list of public servants that would be terminated. I was incredibly angry. I was accompanied by a security guard to my car and told to go home...It was a devastating experience.

In 1993 Jim suffered a very public indignation as he was put on 'indefinite special leave' by the newly elected Borbidge coalition government in Queensland. Mel refers to this period in Jim's journey as 'gardening leave' while Jim more colourfully recalls it as 'house arrest'. In our recent conversations, I came to understand the many implications of Jim losing his job in this fashion. He had to come to terms with the fact that after almost 20 years in the public sector, his career had potentially come to a premature end. He had to reconcile his rejection from government with a strong self-image as a successful and valued contributor. He also had the practical consideration of how he would support his young and growing family.

In the three and a half months Jim spent 'in the garden', he realised he had two choices.

> I had two options; it was either a great opportunity for serious reflection, or I could choose to bear a grudge for the rest of my life.

With the value of hindsight Jim speaks about it as a real turning point in his career and development as a leader. He has talked about it with me many times over the years with a deep sense of pride and achievement.

> It was this event that liberated me from seeing myself having a permanent job in the public sector. It liberated me from seeking the approval of superiors for survival...And it liberated me because it forced me to see if I could really stand on my own two feet.

In an attempt to make sense of his own situation, and having recently completed his MBA, Jim decided to undertake a research project off his own back. He had become curious about the successful initiatives led by some of his colleagues and decided to conduct a series of interviews in an attempt to uncover what made these initiatives successful.

> I found to my amazement that every project that was successful had three ingredients that interact with each other! A clear idea of results, congruence of relationships, and thirdly the structure, systems and capability were aligned to the outcomes. So I found every one of them had congruence between performance, relationships and alignment. And I thought this was like discovering the Holy Grail.

Jim eventually named his Holy Grail the 'Three Frames'. My sense for why the Three Frames were so powerful for Jim was because they aligned with his results orientation from his time in the Victorian Government, but also awakened a more people-oriented approach to leadership which has been glaringly absent from his first very aggressive Life Styles Inventory measure.

Three and a half months into his 'gardening leave', as Jim was considering applying his new found insight into a private sector consulting role, he was contacted by the Director General of the Department of Natural Resources and asked to return to government as his Deputy Director General. Jim agreed to return on the basis that he would be permitted to experiment with the Three Frames in his new role. Still bearing some scars from his ordeal, Jim also required an apology from his former Director General.

These conditions were accepted and Jim went back to work with a new found level of purpose and energy. His more purposeful approach stood out within the bureaucracy and two years later, as a Labour Government swept back into power in Queensland, Jim was offered his first Director General role with the Department of Main Roads (DMR).

3.4.5. The non-rational side of management

> The Department of Main Roads was a testosterone-driven department when I arrived. It was as red as you can get.

At the DMR, Jim found himself in an environment reminiscent of his early experiences in Victoria. In addition to the very aggressive culture, the DMR was known as somewhat of a problem child as it struggled to deliver projects on time and within budget. Jim saw this as the perfect opportunity to put his Three Frames into play in a rigorous fashion. Jim employed another Human Synergistics instrument based on the Circumplex called the Organisational Culture Inventory in order to get some formal measurement of the more intangible elements of his framework. As per Jim's quote above, the data from this inventory showed that the DMR culture was 'as red as you can get'.

The more Jim began to explore these more intangible elements of the DMR, the more curious he became about human behaviour.

> I became very curious about what I would call the non-rational side of management. How does one actually deal with what lies below the surface of human behaviour?

By coincidence or good fortune, Jim's attempt to transform DMR corresponded with his participation in a leadership course being run by the Queensland Government called The Experiential Leadership Development Program (ELDP). Jim recalls the ELDP course as an important step in his leadership journey.

> This was the first time that I started to understand how emotions below the surface profoundly impacted behaviours above the surface. It was a great revelation for me personally.

This is where Jim's leadership journey moved beyond 'lip service' and a 'management fad' as he began to make connections between his leadership and the transformation of his department, as Jim recalls below.

> I think the 'aha' moment was realising that an aggressive approach was going to burn me out and others. That was quite an important realisation that a blue culture is not a soft kind of ideal, it is actually quite critical to ensure sustainability.

Over a period of four years, the DMR became recognised as a department which could be relied upon to deliver its projects on time and within budget. In 2000, Jim was offered the position of Director General for the Department of Education (EQ). With its 80,000 staff and $4 billion dollar budget, Education was considered to be one of the three big portfolios for a Director General, alongside Health and Police and Emergency Services. As I outlined in the opening of this narrative, Jim's effective promotion to one of the big portfolios was tempered by the teachers strike and the 150 million dollar budget deficit he inherited.

Having an emerging appreciation for the role of leaders in organisational transformation, one of Jim's first initiatives in EQ was to undertake a Life Styles Inventory measure for himself and all of his executive team, conducted by Mel who was consulting to Jim. This initiative was significant in itself because unlike the first measure of the Life Styles Inventory which was forced upon Jim, this time he was driving the agenda.

3.4.6. The big gig

> I was really pleased with my Life Styles Inventory remeasure because I had made enormous progress in the blue styles, all of which were absent from my first measure. By this stage of my journey, I was committed to blue leadership and blue cultures but I felt that in the political environment I was working in I really had to display some of the red characteristics in order to survive because I was dealing Ministers and bureaucrats who were used to dealing that way.

Jim's reaction to his Life Styles Inventory remeasure in the quote above is interesting for a couple of reasons. His commitment to a more Constructive and purposeful approach to leadership is affirmed in the dramatic increases he achieved in each of the four blue styles (Figure 17). Despite Jim's intent to model Constructive leadership however, he still believed that his high red scores were necessary for survival.
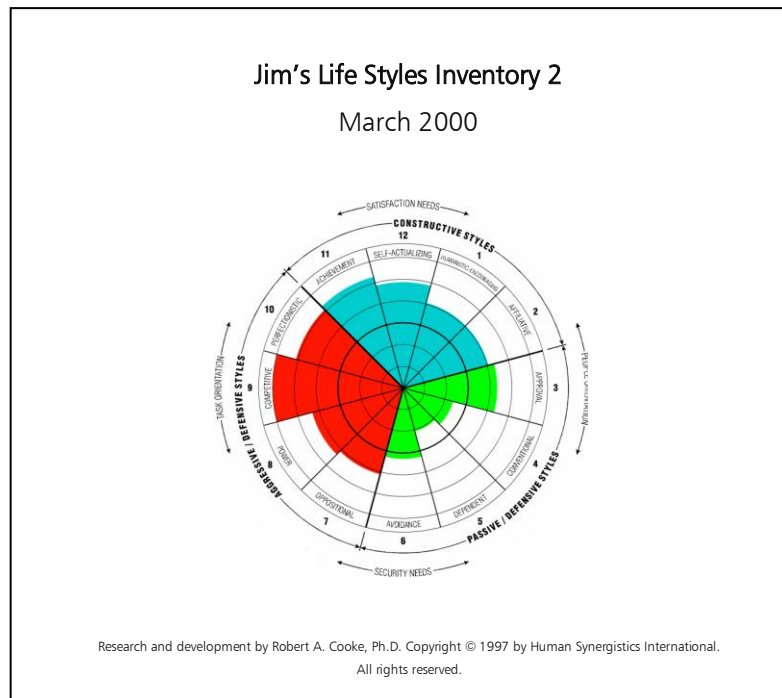
Figure 17: Jim's Life Styles Inventory 2 data (2000)

My first meeting with Jim, described earlier in this narrative, occurred approximately one year after his second Life Styles Inventory measure. After our very engaging first encounter described in the opening of Jim's narrative, he had invited me up to Brisbane to meet his executive team and discuss a formal engagement of our services at EQ. My brief was to outline how we could help EQ to create a powerful story to engage 80,000 staff in Jim's vision to raise literacy and numeracy standards in Queensland.

As I arrived in the foyer of the EQ building, I recall being struck by the very modern architecture and interior design – I could have been in the foyer of a big bank or professional services firm. My positive impression only increased as I was ushered into the meeting room where Jim's team was assembled ready to begin. The room itself was vast, contemporary and loaded with the latest technology. Jim's team was much bigger than I expected, eighteen people in all, and also much younger - there was not a tweed jacket to be seen anywhere. Even more surprisingly, they all seemed genuinely happy to see me; an uncommon occurrence in my first two years as a consultant.

And just when I thought this scene could not get any better, Jim initiated something called a 'check-in' process. Each person publicly declared how they were feeling and what they hoped to get out of the session. To my delight, they were 'excited' about my session and 'eager' to learn everything they could about engaging their staff. The session was perceived very positively. I knew this because when I was finished they did a 'check-out' right there in front of me. To say that I was excited about working with Jim and his team would have been an understatement. Working with government would now be a priority for my fledging consulting business. And then four weeks later, everything changed.

3.4.7. The big swap

> The swap was a devastating moment for me because it made years of work appear to go down the drain in terms of achieving a quantum change in education.

At the peak of Jim's tenure in EQ, he suffered a second great disappointment in his career. The Premier of Queensland decided to do a straight swap between Jim and one of his peers; Jim would become the Director General of Employment and Training (DET) and the incumbent Director General of DET would fill Jim's role at EQ. Though Jim put on a brave and professional face at the time, he later confided in me that he seriously considered leaving the public sector at that moment. Jim was angry because he felt his vision for EQ would now be compromised, and also because he felt that the swap was done for purely political reasons. Understandably, my formal engagement with Jim was put on the back burner.

Jim had gone from leading one of the biggest portfolios available to leading a relatively minor department in DET. Despite the positive public rhetoric that surrounded this swap, Jim's colleagues understood that this was a demotion of sorts. In addition to the moral pain experienced by Jim, the swap involved a serious blow to his ego. As Jim expresses below, all of this pressure manifested itself in his body.

> I remember going to India at that time for a break and I went to an ayurvedic massage. My body could actually feel the tension that had taken place in that period when they were doing the ayurvedic stuff on me and it has this amazing release that I hadn't even noticed or appreciated until I actually went to India.

Notwithstanding the strong blow to his sensibilities, Jim was pragmatic and humble enough to swallow his medicine. He accepted his less glamorous role in DET but did so within a different psychological context.

3.4.8. Wall to wall mahogany

> I just decided I was going to pursue what I actually believed in - Three Frames, change, transformation and achieving cultures...I saw my work in that context, it wasn't dependent on the Minster or the Premier, it was dependent more on the purpose and meaning I had with the people I worked with.

Once Jim found his feet, he invited me back up to Queensland to explore a formal partnership with his new team at DET. Once again, the focus was on engaging Jim's staff, albeit a much smaller number, in his vision for DET. With my new found energy for government work, and being somewhat unaware of the significance of the 'big swap' at the time, I did not hesitate to respond positively to Jim's request. I found myself in the DET foyer a short time later and the contrast to EQ could not have been starker. In place of the light and modern interior of the EQ reception was a dark and foreboding atmosphere created by wall to wall mahogany. Substituting for the bright smile and friendly disposition of the EQ receptionist, was the stern and unhappy looking expression of a woman who clearly did not enjoy her role and wanted to ensure that every guest to the building shared her pain.

Unlike the EQ staff member who greeted me in the foyer and said 'welcome Mr Fuda, we have been expecting you'; the DET receptionist instructed me to fill in the visitor book and then sit down on the uncomfortable looking orange chair in the corner until she could get someone from Jim's office to come

down and 'vouch' for me. Much to her annoyance, I chose to stand for the twenty minutes it took for that person to retrieve me from my bureaucratic nightmare.

As I followed an equally unhappy DET staff member into the mahogany clad elevator and through a maze of narrow, mahogany clad corridors, I reasoned that my reception experience was an anomaly and that I would soon arrive into a bright, modern room filled with bright happy people, who would all be happy to see me. Wrong. The first thing that struck me as the door opened was the large, round, donut-style mahogany table in the middle of the room. Crammed into the small, dark mahogany panelled room were a large group of senior DET staff members who shared the same sunny disposition of the receptionist. I wondered if the cause of this disposition which afflicted DET staff members may have been the mahogany. One particularly unhappy looking gentleman in a tweed jacket took the opportunity to let me know that I was ten minutes late. Under the circumstances, I decided not to inform him that his own department's senseless bureaucracy was to blame.

It is an understatement to say that I was relieved to see Jim's face as he joined the meeting, though I did notice that he lacked a little of his usual spark; not a huge surprise to me given the environment. Jim's 'check-in' process only confirmed my fears; answers ranged from 'fine' at the very positive end to the progressively more negative responses of 'busy' and 'sceptical'; and this is what they were prepared to say out loud.

Undaunted, I pressed on with my presentation with some success. The grumpiest members of the tweed jacket brigade left early and some of Jim's new recruits began to engage with me more openly. Upon Jim's 'check-out' ritual, the remaining people in the room revealed that they were neutral to positive on the idea of working together. Knowing that he needed to make change quickly, Jim announced that he was 'committed' to this project of work; which I took to be Jim-speak for 'we are going to do this and I'd like you all on board'.

I left the meeting with the conflicted feeling that I had just acquired a client I did not really want. As I got in the taxi to head back to the airport, one of my team members rang for a scheduled call. Conscious of the recent day-light saving time change, she innocently asked 'what time is it there?' '1975' I retorted.

3.4.9. Unpacking the blind spots

> During that difficult time at DET, you helped double my reflection. You probably didn't know the background at that stage, but I was pushing and looking for more meaning and I was ready for more of an authentic transformation.

Jim and I engaged in our first formal agenda at DET, which was now three years since our first meeting. Whilst this formal agenda was focused on staff engagement, it was during this time that I began an informal coaching relationship with Jim. I really enjoyed my interactions with him and he appreciated having a source of insight outside of the bureaucracy, as he expresses in the quote above.

Based on Jim's new found appetite for learning and reflection, we got into a regular rhythm of one-on-one meetings. In these sessions, I challenged Jim to match his energy for organisational transformation

with a similar energy for his personal transformation. In particular, I pushed him quite hard to reflect on the impact of his remaining 'red' behaviour that was evident in his most recent Life Styles Inventory measure. Jim responded very openly and thoughtfully to my provocations and reflects on the value of these sessions below.

> So I think my relationship with you has helped me understand myself better, it has helped me to understand how I want others to view me, but very importantly it has helped me to unpack some blind spots. It is unusual to meet a consultant who is able to do that in an integrated way, a holistic way.

Jim had also become a regular attendee at our CEO think tank events in Sydney – the only government leader ever to join this group. I invited Jim into the group because I felt he was as commercial as the private sector CEOs, and also because I felt he would benefit from exposure to some senior people who were already well on the journey to Constructive leadership. I did not realise it at the time, but this network had a profound impact on Jim. Marie, Jim's right hand in leading his Executive Office for more than 20 years reflects on the significance of this group for Jim.

> One of the things that has been significant for Jim has been his connection to other CEOs. I saw a change happen when he started to become part of your wider CEO group, understanding what was actually happening in the wider business sector, and how that could actually be taken back to change the way that he was driving business within a government agency.

In our subsequent conversations, Jim later revealed that my CEO network was important to him because it exposed him to a constant stream of 'cutting edge management concepts' which he was able to synthesise and integrate back into government.

By 2005, Jim had developed a reputation in government for turning around difficult departments. In less than two years at the DET, Jim had shifted the department from its narrow focus on skilling and work to an integrated approach to learning, schooling, skilling and work. As a result, Jim was offered the role of Director General for the Department of Primary Industries (DPI); a department that required both a commercial and cultural transformation.

3.4.10. Beyond behaviour to impact

> This department was well and truly a green department in more ways than one; the most Passive-Defensive department I've ever had to lead. I prefer testosterone-driven departments because at least you can confront them. With the green ones, you never really know how effective you're being because the people are so obedient. I went into this with a new focus on Leadership/Impact. It was something that I hadn't seriously practiced until I went into DPI.

Jim's perception of DPI as a very Passive-Defensive department was well informed; DPI had been measuring their culture using the Human Synergistics Organisational Culture Inventory tool since the 1990s. Jim's challenge at DPI was to take what was a very non-commercial, regulatory-focused agency and transform it into an economic development agency that fostered profitable and sustainable primary industries in Queensland, as per Jim's quote below.

> DPI was not performing as a mainstream agency. It needed to be brought back into the mainstream and the Premier couldn't think of a better person to do it than yours truly.

Although Jim and I had completed our formal engagement in DET, he was very keen to work together again at DPI on his very challenging change agenda. Jim and I both understood that a green culture would not produce the economic transformation that the Premier was wanting. For my part, I was worried that any remnants of aggressive behaviour from Jim would only exacerbate the passive culture he was now leading. Jim and I spoke about using the Leadership/Impact tool with DPI's 70 most senior leaders to show a connection between their impact and the culture they bemoaned. Jim was positively predisposed to the Leadership/Impact tool because he had witnessed case studies in our CEO think tank presented by fellow members who had employed a similar approach to help shift their cultures and performance metrics.

Though Jim and I agreed that a measure of Leadership/Impact for DPI's senior most leaders should be conducted in the near future, there were several things that we agreed to put in place first. Jim needed to establish a leadership team whose capabilities and mindset were aligned to the change agenda, something he did very quickly and decisively. We worked closely together to bring this new team to a shared vision of the future and strategy for DPI, and then engage his 4,000 staff in the changes that were coming.

Following Jim's acceptance of the DPI role, he and I established a more disciplined one-on-one coaching relationship. Though we did not have a formal measure of Leadership/Impact for Jim at this time, we had an agenda to work with based on previous feedback Jim had received from past colleagues, and also from my direct observation of Jim through our formal engagements at DET and now DPI. The agenda was principally focussed on creating space for Jim's subordinates to shine, rather than Jim dominating his environment by virtue of big persona and big ideas. This involved Jim being very mindful of his impact, being less directive, stepping back and listening more.

As 2005 drew to a close, we agreed that the time was now right to launch the Leadership/Impact process with DPI's top 70 leaders. In February 2006, Jim received his first Leadership/Impact feedback - though this was his third piece of personal feedback using the Circumplex. Unlike his first Life Styles Inventory experience where he questioned the integrity of the data and wanted to 'kill the bastards', Jim's reaction to his Leadership/Impact feedback was far more accepting and thoughtful.

In discussion with Jim, there were several reasons for his positive reaction to his Leadership/Impact feedback. For the first time in his three Circumplex assessments, Jim had a Constructive profile (Figure 18); that is, he had more blue than red or green.

Given the passive culture that Jim inherited at DPI, he was particularly gratified that he was promoting extremely high levels of Achievement and self-Actualisation, and very low levels of Approval and Dependence.
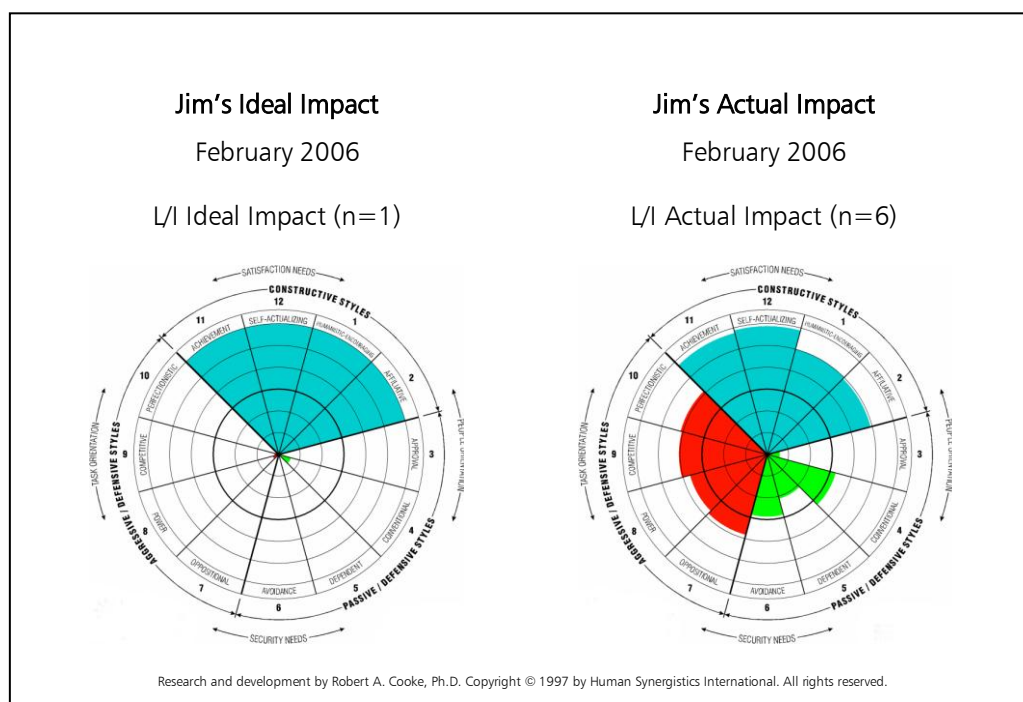
Jim's Ideal Impact

February 2006

L/I Ideal Impact (n=1)

Jim's Actual Impact

February 2006

L/I Actual Impact (n=6)

Figure 18: Jim's Ideal Impact data (2006) Vs Jim's Actual Impact data (2006)

Jim was also encouraged that the data for his top 70 leaders had more blue than red or green with Achievement being the number one style. As per Jim's quote below, the Leadership/Impact tool helped him to understand how the various elements of his impact were promoting or inhibiting his vision for DPI's culture.

> The Leadership/Impact tool was very powerful. It allowed me to link how I was working against the key underpinnings of an achieving culture.

Whereas Jim had been largely focused on organisational transformation to this point in his career, he was now encouraged to enter a period of intense reflection and introspection on his personal leadership.

3.4.11. Intense reflection

> I know people say that tools are a means to an end, but I find them very useful for self-reflection.

Unlike some CEOs I have met, Jim had a strong affinity for tools and frameworks which he credits to his MBA degree. In addition to the Leadership/Impact, Jim played with three additional tools during this period of intense reflection; the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (Jim is an ENTJ), Marcus Buckingham's Strengths Finder (Jim's signature strengths are Strategist, Future, Connectivity, Input and Ideation), and the Johari Window – not an ancient Indian concept, but a cognitive psychological tool developed by two American psychologists called Joseph and Harry in 1955.

The Myers Briggs tool assisted Jim's reflection by encouraging him to quiet his 'E' (extroversion) and in his words 'still the world, and develop the capacity to reflect before you speak'. The Strengths Finder encouraged Jim to play to his core strengths and empower those around him to fill the gaps. The Johari

Window helped Jim to explore his 'blind spots'; that is, the things that others 'knew' about Jim, but that he was unaware of.

Jim had experimented with the Myers Briggs tool and Johari window in advance of his Leadership/Impact measure, but it was the Leadership/Impact instrument that helped Jim connect his personal development to his organisational agenda. In the context of his Leadership/Impact feedback, each of these tools gave Jim a different lens into how he could become less directive and create space for his subordinates to shine.

Aside from the coaching that I was providing to Jim on his leadership, he also had other sources of insight that were feeding this time of reflection. One powerful source of insight for Jim was very close to home.

> My family has been important, because they know all the buttons to press...like when my daughter who is very bright does something that you disapprove of, her reaction to me is 'you elected to be a parent, I didn't'. Very powerful! It teaches in many ways. The feedback from my kids was actually, believe it or not, a real turning point. They helped me realise that I was using a very authoritarian parental style.

Another powerful source of insight for Jim during this time was Margaret Wheatley; an American teacher, consultant and author of bestselling books such as *Leadership and the New Science*. Margaret, or Meg as Jim knows her, was introduced to Jim through a Queensland Government sponsored initiative. She took a liking to him and became a mentor in his leadership journey. Meg is eclectic for a leadership guru since her philosophies are heavily influenced by a wide range of disciplines beyond management including science, history and theology, as well as her practice of Buddhism.

Jim's close relationship with Meg encouraged him to explore the purpose and meaning of his work beyond delivering a result to government. Jim started to make connections between his strong religious convictions and his work. In my many conversations with Jim on this subject, it became clear to me that he came to see his work in a much broader and more important context; that of enriching the lives of those he interacted with and the broader society in which he operated.

> For me I would say the spiritual dimension became an absolutely fundamental part of my leadership journey. I am driven by soul and the purpose and meaning of my life. It was that fundamental anchoring of purpose and meaning that really drove the growth in my journey.

In my coaching of Jim during this time, I noted that he was really distancing himself from his 'authoritarian beginnings', and was crafting a new identity for himself as a purposeful and spiritual leader.

3.4.12. Man of the people

> He actually began to put himself out there and get among his staff, which was a real change for him.

In the quote above, Jim's long term colleague Jill describes a subtle but significant shift taking place in Jim's leadership approach; he was becoming more and more comfortable as a man of the people. I had observed Jim experiment with face-to-face staff interaction during his previous Director General roles, but it was at DPI that I saw him embed such practices into the systems and structures of his department. Jim instituted a number of collaboration processes including 'town hall' meetings where Jim would talk about DPI's strategy for transformation, 'DG dialogues' where Jim would take calls from anywhere in the organisation on any topic, and Jim's favourite process, 'learning circles' which he would employ for a range of purposes; from responding to crises to business planning. Learning circles are an ancient form of communication where people literally sit in a circle with no hierarchy to discuss matters of importance. Jim talks about the value of learning circles below.

> I genuinely believe that when you work through learning circles, you actually appreciate the fact that you're not the front and centre of wisdom! In fact, there is a genuine collective wisdom, and one of the great gifts of being a CEO is when you realise that you can tap into that in a real and tangible way and move your organisation ahead in leaps and bounds.

The 'Achievement Planning' process was another initiative Jim initiated in order to embed authentic dialogue into DPI's systems and structures.

> One of our best innovations has been Achievement Plans. They used to be called Performance Reviews but there's no positive frame to that. We have Achievement Plans for the department as a whole, which my minister participates in, and external stakeholders assess the overall outcomes. We also have individual Achievement Plans which I do in learning circles with all my senior staff.

I have personally witnessed several of these sessions. And while there is nothing new about goal setting processes, the manner in which Jim conducted these sessions produced very high levels of commitment and goal alignment from Jim's staff. Mel, who also partnered with Jim in many of his collaboration processes, recognises them as a significant factor in Jim's transformation.

> The key to successful leadership transformation in Jim has been about authentic engagement, about really listening to the people who are around him – that could be industry, stakeholders or staff.

We didn't know it at the time, but Jim's commitment to authentic engagement was about to be tested in serious way; twice.

3.4.13. Weathering the storm

> We had reports of a category five cyclone coming towards us and we knew we weren't fully prepared for it. It was a devastating moment. Bananas spread across the horizon like matchsticks. Trees uprooted, lives uprooted. I have never witnessed such devastation in my life.

Cyclone Larry, as it became known, hit Innisfail and the Atherton Tablelands in northern Queensland in 2006.

Because this area was at the heart of primary industries, Jim played an integral role in coordinating the government response to this natural disaster. Jim recalls the nature of the challenge below.

> We had learning circles in farm sheds, in flattened out areas of banana trees with individuals crying, where the media is not there so you can't grand stand...Even though I was working on an average sleep cycle of 5 hours a day, 7 days a week, for almost a year none stop, I never felt like I was exhausted.

Working with Jim during this period is an experience I will never forget. My belief is that for the better part of this period, Jim was in a state of flow drawing upon everything he had learned in his leadership journey to deliver a result for the people of northern Queensland. Jim reflects on the outcomes of his efforts below.

> The result was electrifying. The people of northern Queensland witnessed government at all levels deliver a seamless service beyond their expectations. It was a moment of great encouragement for all of us in primary industries. It was a moment where we actually got encouragement from the purpose and meaning of creating public value.

Barely one year after Cyclone Larry, Jim's leadership was tested again with the outbreak of Equine Influenza, commonly referred to as horse flu.

> Equine Influenza broke out at Eastern Creek in Sydney and spread like wildfire across the eastern seaboard. We had an unseemly battle for vaccines. We knew horses well, what we didn't know so well were the people. There was an underbelly of a new class of Australia I had never seen - they broke quarantine barriers with little regard for the consequences.

Equine Influenza broke out in August 2007 and was so severe that it threatened to destroy Australia's multi-billion dollar horse racing industry. Having only recently recovered from the aftermath of Cyclone Larry, Jim required a huge effort from his department in order to respond to this new crisis. The response involved working collaboratively with the state governments of Victoria and New South Wales, as well as the Federal government. Marie, Jim's long time colleague recalls how Jim energised his department.

> We had over 700 staff involved and on the Sunday after the outbreak Jim sent a personal message to their mobile phones expressing his gratitude and appreciation for their efforts. What made it even more significant was that 200 of the staff were actually together at a 4:30pm briefing when he sent the SMS message. All the mobiles went off in the room at the one time, and here was this message from the Director General on a Sunday afternoon. So that was really special; staff really appreciated that, and they saw Jim as a human being, they saw Jim as somebody working beside them, and that was really important.

While many people thought Equine Influenza could not be eradicated, Jim maintained faith that his department could drive a permanent solution that would eradicate the virus and save the horse racing industry, as per his quote below.

> I was ridiculed personally by the Queensland media in the Courier Mail who said that I was the only person who actually believed that through persistence, patience and hard work we could actually eradicate Equine Influenza. In March of 2008, Equine Influenza was officially declared eradicated.

My insight at the time was that Jim was able to be in the middle of these two crises, without being consumed by them. Recently, Jim told me that if these crises had presented themselves ten years ago, he

would have jumped in the middle and 'attacked the problem at huge cost to himself and others'. With the benefit of his accumulated learnings, Jim was able to find stillness and calm amid the chaos and lead his team to more effective solutions. He reflects on his approach to the two crises below.

> So to me the two crises were a good way to apply all the learnings that I had accumulated over a long time outside of managerialism and into the wider community...And to find Ministers engaging with my very collaborative approach, and even liking it, was to me quite extraordinary.

In his four years at DPI, Jim was able to shift the department from its regulatory heritage to become a modern and progressive economic development agency. DPI's contribution to the Queensland economy could now be measured in GDP growth from agriculture and private sector investment in research and development (R&D). In fact, under Jim's stewardship, DPI in Queensland boasted greater R&D funding than any other state in Australia.

On the back of these achievements and his leadership of two significant crises, Jim approached his retest of Leadership/Impact in February 2008 with a sense of nervous anticipation.

3.4.14. In the centre of the learning circle

> A seminal moment for me was when I got direct feedback on my Leadership/Impact results in a learning circle with my 70 senior leaders. That was really quite an extraordinary event in that it made my progress very real. What I hoped for as a leader, as a collaborative leader, was actually acknowledged and recognised, and that was quite a humbling moment.

As per the quote above, Jim wanted to give his top 70 leaders an opportunity to provide him with direct feedback on his Leadership/Impact remeasure. He made it clear to everyone in the room that this was a big moment for him; though they probably did not fully appreciate why.

Jim's Leadership/Impact remeasure was actually his fourth 360 degree assessment using the Circumplex over 17 years. As per the prologue for this narrative, Jim notes that his journey was one of epic proportions. From the Constructive result Jim had achieved in early 2006, he was able to maintain extremely high scores in the Constructive styles and further reduce his scores in the Defensive styles (Figure 19). I perceived this to be a noteworthy achievement considering most of the previous two years had been spent managing two enormous crises under extreme pressure and sleep deprivation. In my mind, if ever he was to revert to his authoritarian origins in the Victorian public service, then this would have been the time. Instead, he actually improved his impact.

Though none of us knew it at that moment, this was Jim's last learning circle at DPI. It was after this session that Jim decided he was ready to tackle his final frontier – the corporate sector.
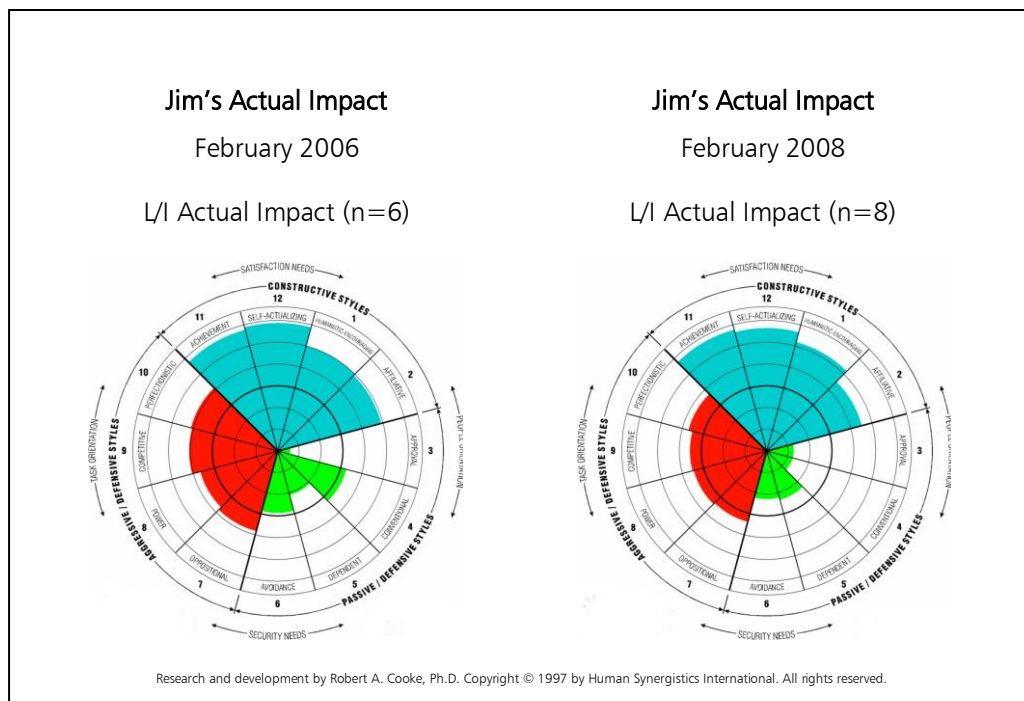
Jim's Actual Impact
February 2006
L/I Actual Impact (n=6)

Jim's Actual Impact
February 2008
L/I Actual Impact (n=8)

Figure 19: Jim's Actual Impact data (2006) Vs Jim's Actual Impact data (2008)

3.4.15. The joust with fear and insecurity

> After 33 years in government, I felt like I had achieved everything I could but felt like I still had lots to offer. That realisation was very, very confronting. I was in avoidance for a while. You certainly helped me confront the avoidance issues. You probably did it too well!

No sooner had Jim privately decide to switch sectors than his confident and purposeful demeanour developed cracks. In both one-on-one meetings I had with Jim following his decision to pursue a private sector appointment, he started each conversation with two or three stories of senior business people who had told Jim that they thought 'he would be a very successful private sector CEO'. Initially, I put this down to nervous excitement and Jim's desire to keep me abreast of developments in his emerging job opportunities.

As we sat down to dinner in Brisbane's Southbank area for our third one-on-one in the three months since Jim came to his decision, he once again began the conversation with an anecdote referencing positive feedback from the private sector. Sensing that Jim was not keeping me up to date but actually looking for my confirmation, I decided to give him some very direct feedback. I told him that I did not question for one moment his ability to be a private sector CEO, but that it sounded to me like he did.

My very direct feedback changed Jim's facial expression. Gone was the confident extroversion which had become very familiar to me and in its place was a 'deer in the headlights' kind of expression that I had never seen him express before. That was followed by a prolonged silence, and then Jim's very thoughtful and humble realisation which he reflects on in the quote below.

> That was a blind spot that you picked quite well. I actually had a certain lack of confidence, despite all my achievements, that I could successfully do a transition outside of government into a private sector CEO role. And I think confronting that issue with your help was very important.

This episode with Jim served to remind me then, and now, that even the most enlightened and successful leaders have human frailties. Jim told me that my very direct intervention enabled him to quickly regain his stride. My own view is that Jim's search for purpose and meaning pushed him into unchartered territory and his brief crisis of confidence was a reaction to that.

A short time later, Jim announced that he would be leaving the public sector to head up the health business for the private company developing Australia's largest master-planned city. Less than one year later, Jim was appointed as CEO of the whole enterprise.

3.4.16. From pilgrim to skydiver

When I asked Jim to describe his leadership journey using a metaphor in a recent interview, he articulated the rich commentary of pilgrim's progress below – perhaps a connection to his faith.

> I'd say [the metaphor for my leadership journey is] pilgrim's progress. There's the land of blue, where you can experience a synchronistic universe, where your purpose, meaning and outcomes, relationships, and structures, systems and capabilities are fully aligned. You're making a difference, but you're part of a community making a difference, and you are fully aligned both personally and in your work. There isn't a dichotomy that exists between Jim Varghese the family man and Jim Varghese the working person – they're one and the same person. And you can be yourself, 100%, and not have to role play. And I think that's pilgrim's progress. As you know in the original story of pilgrim's progress, there are a number of challenges and dangerous ravines to cross and enemies that you face and times that you think you are going to die, you're going to fall off these cliffs or bridges that look very fragile. But it's your profound belief that that's where you're going, and the only difference that I've learnt now is that the pilgrim's progress is actually there at every moment, it's not an end point, it's actually there each time that you move, and each time it becomes clearer, but that it was always there, but it awaited for you to open your eyes and see it.

The quote above is typical Jim; full of exuberance, colour and movement. Perhaps what is more interesting is that when I asked Jim to reflect on this metaphor recently, after he had made the decision to leave government, he articulated a very different type of metaphor.

> Jumping out of this aircraft in Queenstown, in many ways was kind of allegory for what I would subsequently do; which is to sky jump out of the public sector into the private sector and experience that whole different world with a belief that I could do it.

For me, there is nothing fragile or expansive about the metaphor above; it speaks to a man who is focused, confident and in control of his destiny – even jumping out of a plane. Perhaps even more suggestive for me of where Jim is at in his transformation is the holistic nature of his insight. Jim captures this sentiment below.

> It's not a head journey; it's not a mind journey by itself. And in fact I'd even go further than that and say it's a heart, mind and soul journey where the beneficiary is not just your own leadership journey, but the improved quality of your relationships with your wife, your family, and your friends.

3.4.17. Epilogue

At the time of writing this narrative, Jim and I are no longer engaged in a client-consultant relationship but we remain close and speak on a regular basis. Jim continues as the CEO of the development company building Australia's largest master-planned city.

I know this company well; it has a unique set of attributes and challenges. The company's founder and Chairman, a leading light in Brisbane's Indian community, is one of Australia's most successful entrepreneurs. In the image of Australia's great dynasties, his children and children-in law are employed throughout the business. In short, there is no other leader that I know with the unique mix of management and relational skills to effectively lead this company to its ambitious vision.

Jim's focus on spirituality has intensified. Early in 2009, Jim and his wife Pauline attended a two day retreat with one of the world's preeminent authorities on spirituality; Eckhart Tolle. This is just one of many commitments to spiritual development that Jim continues to invest in and his conviction still makes me think about going back to church from time to time.

In 2009, Jim was also honoured in the Queen's Birthday Honour's List with an Order of Australia for his services to the public sector.

Beyond this research project, Jim has also invested significant effort into sharing his leadership journey with other leaders. In September 2009, Jim and I shared a stage at the 11th Australian Conference on Leadership and Culture where we addressed a packed ballroom of more than 1,000 leaders at the Sofitel Hotel in Melbourne. Jim's presentation at this conference was filmed and is included in this doctoral submission as *Appendix F – DVD of CEO Presentations*.

In November 2009, we replicated this presentation at Brisbane's CEO Institute. In both events, Jim delivered his story with such an authentic mix of honesty, humour and humility that many attendees had tears in their eyes; some from laughing and some from crying – the surest sign of purposeful contribution that I can think of.

For my part, Jim's story-type of epic feels wholly appropriate to describe the difficulty I had writing his narrative; it has certainly felt epic. Jim's story spans two decades, multiple government departments and two different measurement tools. On top of that, Jim is one of the deepest and most spiritual leaders I have met. I took on the daunting task of trying to capture his leadership journey because I wanted his unique voice to be heard so that others could be inspired by Jim in the way that I have.

3.4.18. Jim's reaction to reading his narrative

I have just finished reading your profile and analysis of me. I am very humbled by your assessments and comments. I cannot disagree with any of your analyses, comments and interpretations. I have nothing more to add.

3.5. NARRATIVE – CLYNTON BARTHOLEMEUSZ

3.5.1. <u>Prologue</u>

My journey was probably a comedy, a slightly black one. I say that because at the end of the day we don't create cures for cancer, we sell skin and beauty products. We should be able to have a bit of fun. So there was always an element of whatever we were doing as a team, especially the executive team, that we always brought that idea to the fore, we always kept that in mind even when things got a little bit heavy. Because there has to be the concept that what we are doing here is actually optimising structures for the end benefit that we are going to sell more skin care. So let's be real for the moment around that. There was definitely the concept of lightness, some humour. I would probably say that we tried to steer away from the satire thing. So there wasn't too much harpooning of ourselves. What I would say is that within the comedy there were times when it became a bit of an action drama because of some of the things we had to do relate to our journey as a serious competitor in the FMCG space. When you say things like, 'Ok guys you have built up a 20 million dollar business in one area but that is not the real focus of the organisation going forward.' There is a lot of high drama around something like that because making those kinds of decisions obviously sends shock waves through the organisation. The fact that in the early stages of my leadership journey I was concealing to the whole organisation that my personal life was in chaos added a complicated subplot to the drama.

3.5.2. <u>Mr Nivea</u>

> We finished 2004 with 23% growth. Eight out of 13 brands were sitting in the number one or two positions in their markets. So why commit to a leadership transformation journey? Well I could see storm clouds on the horizon.

I met Clynton in mid 2004 at a CEO Forum in Sydney where I was a keynote speaker on the subject of leadership and organisational change. In a room full of mostly fifty-something Anglo males, Clynton stood out. Judging by his dark and youthful complexion, I figured him to be mid 30s and of Indian heritage; I was right on both counts. The other thing that made Clynton stand out to me on this day was that he exuded real warmth and openness; even at a distance of twenty metres. Among the dozen questions I received at the conclusion of my intentionally provocative speech, Clynton's was the only one that, in content and tone, lacked any undertone of cynicism or competitiveness. I have come to expect a level of cynicism in these settings as CEOs compete with me and each other to be the biggest 'brain' in the room. I think they compete with me partly because I'm young compared to my typical CEO audience, and partly because I challenge some often deeply held assumptions. Clynton's question just struck me as curious and thoughtful. I made a mental note to seek him out in the break. I needn't have.

When the break was called, Clynton began purposefully striding in my direction. As he approached, I noticed his sharp pin stripe suit, pastel tie and fashionably pointed shoes that would have worked equally well in a trendy bar setting. His handshake was warm like the one you use with an old friend, his smile engaged all of his facial muscles, and his skin was radiant. He introduced himself as the Australian and New Zealand Managing Director (MD) of Beiersdorf, the German multinational who make the Nivea skin care products among other brands. I remember thinking that he looked exactly like what the MD of Nivea should look like.

At the end of these speeches, I am typically approached by several audience members who either want to give me their business card or impart an alternative viewpoint upon me; it's a 50:50 bet. Clynton was clearly in the former camp, and I was finding our conversation so engaging that I ignored the queue of increasingly impatient CEOs building up behind him; I was pretty certain they were in the latter camp. Clynton told me that his business was performing well but that he was concerned about the sustainability of that performance for several reasons.

> Firstly, I could see some of the bigger competitors were really starting to pay attention to our success. Secondly, the financial expectations of our head office and our very demanding customers were just growing. And thirdly, our pipeline of nine years of new category launches in Nivea was starting to slow down.

He liked my ideas on leadership and change and wanted to set up a meeting to discuss how we might work together. We agreed that we would meet at his office in the next fortnight and also that we would each bring a colleague to that meeting; Clynton would bring Kevin, his Human Resources Director and I would bring Leanne, the Account Director in my company who I had in mind to lead the Beiersdorf engagement, should they sign up. I chose Leanne because I had a feeling that she would hit it off with Clynton. Leanne was my youngest Account Director at just 29 years old and we had often faced

opposition from prospects because of a perceived lack of experience. Despite her youth, I had hired Leanne a year earlier because I was struck by her depth of knowledge and professionalism, which had been honed over five years in a global management consulting firm. I was fairly confident that Clynton's natural warmth and openness would create a receptive environment for Leanne. I briefed Leanne very thoroughly and told her that this felt like an almost perfect opportunity; a great company, with great brands, that was performing well, and was led by a young, successful, but very open MD.

Our enthusiasm to work with Beiersdorf only grew as we learnt more about the history of the organisation, and the unique challenges that Clynton was facing. Clynton had been hired as the first employee of Beiersdorf Australia and New Zealand Cosmed in 1994, having joined the organisation to relaunch the Nivea brand in this part of the world while working inside the distributor Smith and Nephew. The global acquisition by Beiersdorf of the consumer business of Smith and Nephew in 2000 meant that Clynton had to very quickly shift from running a small marketing team to a much larger and more diversified business. This meant that his budget doubled, his staff responsibilities went from 5 to 200, the number of brands increased from 1 to 6 across 4 categories, and his span of control shifted from a marketing division to a comprehensive national and international distribution network covering two countries and seven states.

Clynton and Kevin's openness allowed Leanne and I to scrutinise all aspects of the business; from the vision and strategy, through to the leadership effectiveness of the executive team. We came to learn that Beiersdorf was not well equipped to deal with the challenges that Clynton had identified, even though their past financial performance may have suggested otherwise. Despite their best efforts to address these challenges, Clynton and Kevin openly shared where their attempts were falling short, as Clynton describes below.

> While our performance was good, it was a bit erratic. My executive team and I had done some work on vision and values, but it wasn't really uniting the organisation. In fact, I felt we just weren't getting the necessary traction. I would say, realistically, we really weren't a cohesive leadership group; there was more competition than collaboration.

We agreed to commence a comprehensive engagement that would start by revisiting Beiersdorf's vision and strategy, and would then move into focussing on the leadership effectiveness of Clynton and his executive team. Leanne had taken a very active role in the dialogue and I was confident that she had grasped the nature of the challenges facing Beiersdorf. As I had anticipated, Clynton and Kevin did not object to Leanne leading our engagement together, so long as I remained connected with Clynton and periodically attended executive team interventions.

Although it was only our first meeting, Leanne and I got a sense that Clynton's motivation for engaging us was perhaps a little deeper than he was letting on. Clynton was overtly tactful and respectful in the way he spoke about his executive team, perhaps because Kevin was in the room at the time. But his tonality, body language and the way he answered some of our questions about his direct reports suggested some concerns. Leanne and I read between the lines and discerned that Clynton's team were

functioning as an executive team in name only, and that Clynton was largely powering the business forward on his own. This suspicion is something that he confirmed for us, some time later.

> All of the organisational factors did play a role in forcing my hand to engage with you. But if I am to be really honest, the reason I undertook the journey to become a better leader and foster Constructive leadership was just actually because I was personally exhausted. I had been 'Mr. Nivea' for 9 solid years and I just couldn't keep pushing the business by myself. I really needed to create the environment where my team could take the reins. It was probably a bit selfish; I wanted to spend more time thinking about the future and where we were heading.

The negative consequences of being 'Mr Nivea' became apparent to us in the first few months of our engagement.

3.5.3. Beauty is only skin deep

> If you had a problem, I would fix it for you. If you couldn't make a decision, I would make it for you. If sales wanted to go to war against marketing, hell, call me in to be the referee. At least you knew I would stop the eye gauging.

It became apparent to us early in our engagement that despite excellent financial performance, Beiersdorf did not appear to possess an achievement-oriented culture. Leanne conducted several focus groups with mid to senior level staff which revealed that many people worked at Beiersdorf because they respected Clynton, liked the brands and the people, and the office was close to home. Leanne's insights on the focus groups, expressed in the quote below, concerned me at the time.

> What surprised me about the focus groups was that these mid-senior level managers did not really articulate any real ambition for themselves or their company.

Leanne and I struggled to reconcile was how someone as apparently open, approachable and engaging as Clynton could be leading an organisation that appeared to be fairly passive. Our confusion only grew as Leanne uncovered a genuine affection and admiration for Clynton at all level of the business. In fact, many Beiersdorf employees from executives to storemen, considered Clynton a friend.

The first hypothesis that we tested with Clynton was that his long history with Beiersdorf and deep knowledge of every product, person and process meant that the staff really did see him as an expert in most facets of the business. After all, how many Managing Directors can say that they were their company's first employee? It would stand to reason then that people would default to Clynton on many things. The fact that Clynton could deliver his insights in a manner that was consistent with his warm and friendly demeanour only compounded the dependence on him.

> I think I was very adept at making my team feel relaxed and comfortable by suggesting something in a way that was not threatening. But in essence, my approach was still having the impact of being highly constraining. I even remember thinking that I was being efficient by finishing people's sentences.

We formed a second hypothesis during the process of reviewing Beiersdorf's strategic content. We felt that the existing vision and strategy did not provide a cohesive intent to the organisation, nor did it create clear accountabilities for its execution. Clynton reflects on this challenge below.

> We did not have a clear purpose for the company; I think we were a bit lost to some degree. There was no clear definition as to what we were all about; nothing to say 'this is what we stand for, and this is what we're going to do'.

Leanne discovered that each of the functional units treated the strategy as somewhat of a menu; they simply picked the objective they liked best and ignored the rest. When she peeled back the layers on this issue, Leanne found that this behaviour was motivated primarily by a competitive dynamic between the various business units; particularly sales and marketing. As a result, much of Clynton's time was spent adjudicating between warring factions.

One of the first things that Leanne did was to facilitate a new vision statement with the executive team. After much deliberation and debate, the team agreed to a vision of 'by 2008 all of our focus brands will be #1 or #2 in market share in their respective categories'. Though Clynton and the team didn't fully grasp it at the time, the metric of market share forced all parts of the organisation to collaborate in its achievement. Sales could not achieve it without Marketing; Marketing could not achieve it without Logistics, and so on.

While Clynton's history with the organisation and the lack of purpose appeared to explain much of the dynamic we found at Beiersdorf in those early months, they do not explain it completely. It was only some years later that Clynton revealed another, and perhaps more significant factor.

> I would say that looking back now, even though I might have been easy going, loved a laugh, it wasn't my style to empower the people that worked for me. Before they volunteered their suggested solution, I would always volunteer mine. So even though I might have couched it in terms of 'this is a suggestion' or in a relaxed manner, the impact was that I was actually very much constraining them. I would say I was very directional. Maybe it was my own insecurities at being at least 5 or 6 years younger than the people on the executive team that led me to wanting to have all the answers to their questions.

On reflection, I think Leanne and I were blind to Clynton's insecurities back in the early days because we readily associated his warmth and openness with confidence and self-belief. The fact that Clynton projected such a centred persona only seemed to validate our assumption.

I also think that Clynton had these insecurities fairly well hidden, even from himself. In fact, Clynton told me that it was only through this research project that he was forced to reflect on where these insecurities may have come from. Prior to him assuming the MD role at Beiersdorf, he had had no formal leadership training. Being only 36 years old at the time, he was the youngest member among his executive team, and considerably younger than his international peer group in the global corporation. Clynton now believes that all of these factors encouraged him to dominate his executive team in an effort to prove he was worthy of the MD role; even if he did so with a smile.

3.5.4. Cool, calm and collected

> Some people were a bit surprised with my leadership data, but I wasn't. Intuitively I felt like I was having a mixed impact so it was good to see it confirmed on paper.

Seven months into our engagement with Beiersdorf, Clynton and the executive team undertook their first measure of Leadership/Impact. Leanne and I were genuinely unsure about what Clynton's data would look like; we found him constructive to deal with personally but our interactions with the executive team suggested to us that he was having a mixed impact. Neither of us predicted what we found when we received his Leadership/Impact folder. The thing that struck us most was that he had a very small impact overall (Figure 20). Most CEOs we had worked with to that point had fairly large extensions in their data which reached the 90th percentile, whether Defensive or Constructive. In Clynton's case, only four of the 12 styles broke the 50th percentile and none of them reached it by much. We found it ironic that someone with such a big presence could have such a small impact.

The second thing we noticed was that three of those four largest extensions were Defensive; Oppositional, Competitive and Dependent. We were getting a clearer picture about how Clynton was motivating and encouraging people primarily to oppose ideas, compete with one another, and wait for him to make decisions.
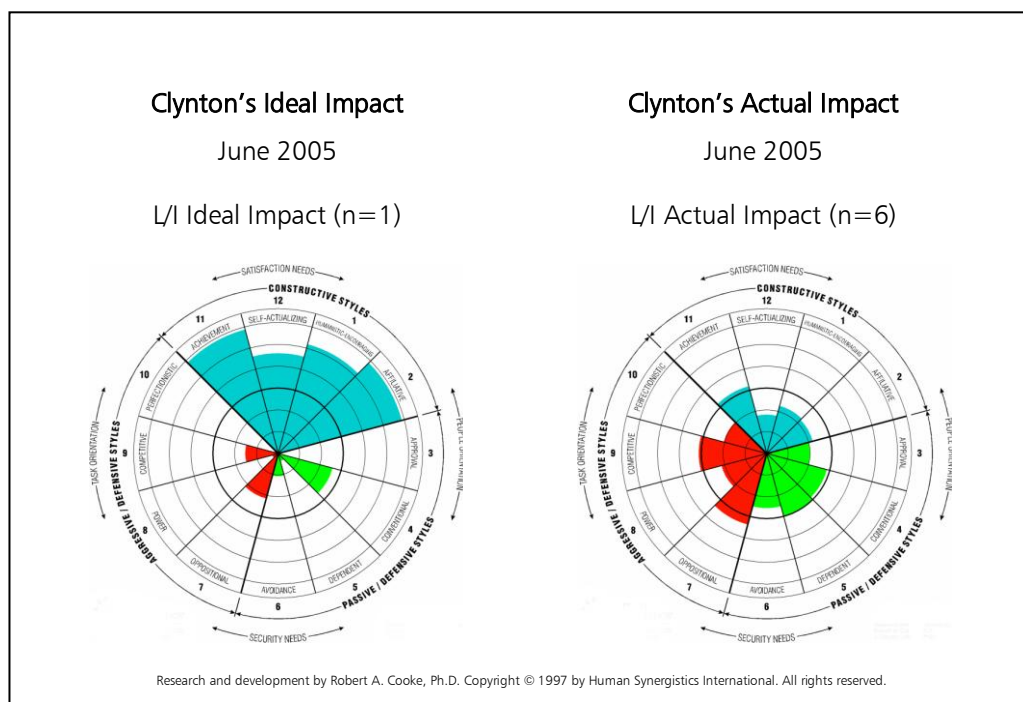
Figure 20: Clynton's Ideal Impact data (2005) Vs Clynton's Actual Impact data (2005)

As I helped Leanne prepare her workshop to debrief the results for the Beiersdorf executive team, we did so without the anxiety that usually accompanies a session where we will give the CEO challenging leadership data. I remember feeling confident that Clynton would take his feedback well and that we did not need to spend too much time preparing him to receive the data well in the team setting. Our assumption was correct and it is something that Leanne recalls as a consistent feature of her interactions with him over the years.

He didn't take it personally. He adopted a very practical approach to the whole idea of personal transformation. It didn't feel like something that went to the very core of him as a person, it was exactly what we suggested it should be; a change in leadership behaviour.

We suspected that Clynton's cool, calm and collected response to his first Leadership/Impact measure may also have been aided by the fact that he had a more Constructive profile than the other members of his executive team. Nevertheless, this reaction was something we experienced consistently with Clynton over six years and something he consciously worked at. Recently, I asked Clynton to reflect on this.

It is my style to keep things pretty light, and diffuse a tense situation so that maybe we can actually work through some of the issues. We've had to deal with some heavy stuff over the years but if I can keep the team positively motivated by using a bit of appropriate humour then I think that is fine. I don't think you need to be a heavy leader.

Leanne told me that Clynton's demeanour in the debrief workshop encouraged two things from his direct reports; firstly, they all shared their data very openly. Secondly, they gave Clynton very detailed examples of the type of behaviour which had led to his Defensive data. Specifically, that he did not listen enough, that he was always taking charge, and that he rarely provided any positive feedback.

I realised through conversation with my team that I had such high standards for myself that I found it very difficult to compliment people on a job well done. People found me critical and hard to impress.

Clynton responded to this feedback with curiosity rather than the resistance that I had seen many CEOs display as they struggle to reconcile others' view of them with their own self-image. Leanne told me that they drew up his action plan before the end of the workshop. It focused on the two Leadership/Impact strategies that would directly address the data in his profile, and the specific feedback given to him in the session by his direct reports. He chose to focus on 'Influencing' in a conscious effort to be less directive and more open to the influence of others, and 'Providing Feedback' which he now committed to do on a 'positive to critical ratio' of three to one. The simplicity that Clynton applied to his action planning was something that we found to be a consistent feature of his leadership journey.

3.5.5. KISS (keep it simple stupid)

You have got to be really simple in how you approach this stuff. There is a real danger for leaders in this whole process that if you don't keep it simple, you actually run the risk of harpooning the process. It can be perceived as a theoretical model that's not based on practicality.

Consistent with Clynton's quote above, Leanne and I perceived very little risk in him overcomplicating the process. He had told us in that very first meeting at the Beiersdorf offices that he had a strong bias toward keeping things as simple as possible. I remember Kevin nodded in a way that suggested he had learned this lesson the hard way. Part of our pitch to prospects and clients when we are contracting around the leadership agenda is that a significant improvement in impact is possible with fairly simple changes. Clynton took us at our word and behaved accordingly. Leanne reflected to me how Clynton's bias toward simplicity over theory also pervaded the broader organisation.

In the whole of Beiersdorf, they've got one model in their minds about leadership [the Circumplex] and are really focussed on that. They don't intellectualise, theorise or make it into more than it is. That enabled a very practical approach to change. It was systematic and step-by-step.

Clynton's preference for a very practical approach allowed me to construct a different coaching model than the model we had commonly employed in the past. Up to this point, every CEO we had engaged with wanted me exclusively in the role of their coach. I think this was partly driven by testimonials from previous clients, and the respective CEO's desire to work directly with the founder of the company; me.

The role of the Account Director in my organisation had previously been to coach the CEO's direct reports specifically on Leadership/Impact strategies, and provide the CEO with insights and information about how to advance the organisation's change agenda. In this case, since Clynton didn't have a big ego and Leanne had the most intimate day to day involvement with Beiersdorf. Clynton was keen to have a structured coaching relationship with Leanne on his own leadership journey. Knowing Leanne's proficiency in our coaching processes, I was very comfortable for her to fill this role.

My role with Clynton was less defined and more sporadic in nature. I tended to focus on exposing him to new ideas in the fields of organisational change and leadership, and providing a friendly ear for him to discuss the trials and tribulations of a fairly tumultuous personal life. Clynton has told Leanne and me many times over the years that he has found this combination of coaching and support to be extremely effective.

Leanne and I did not feel we had to justify our thoughts or go to great lengths to influence Clynton.

> With you and Leanne as coaches, I was always engaged and curious. Always reflective also, wanting to get some feedback on my own impressions, attitudes, style, and how you thought I was going. I was not just ticking a box. I was actually trying to affect change and learn from you.

To this day, we cannot recall a single piece of significant advice that Clynton has rejected in six years. It's not that he has ever been passive; rather he acknowledged that we had expertise in this area that he lacked, and he wanted to extract every ounce of knowledge so that he could distribute leadership further down his organisation.

3.5.6. Creating space for others

> I desperately wanted more exchange of ideas from the people that worked for me. But I also realised my non verbal cues had been letting me down. I remember sitting in a meeting watching people watch me and they were just looking for clues.

Clynton's executive team had become so conditioned to Clynton articulating his ideas first that they had lost the habit of taking initiative and thinking for themselves. The negative consequences of this cycle were to drag Clynton down into the business' day to day operations, and reinforce a great divide between his stature and that of his direct reports. As Clynton reveals above, he became very conscious to encourage his executive team to fill the space he would have filled previously himself. In a coaching session with Leanne, he devised a technique of using silence to help create space.

> People found that silence difficult but what would happen was that they would quickly fill the void generally with good ideas that solved the problem. And while it may not have been solved in the way that I would have solved it, the business still had a good outcome, and more importantly my team actually enjoyed a sense of true self actualisation in their roles.

Clynton recalls the positive impact of this strategy below.

> I remember on one occasion a direct report of mine who is, let me say also very prone to putting up her ideas upfront, actually said to me, 'wow, that was a great use of silence. You just let me fill in the blanks. And I know it took me a while but I feel really committed to this solution now. You know what; I am going to use that technique with my people.'

Both Clynton and Leanne feel that this simple technique put him and the team on a positive trajectory. For my part, having observed the early interactions of the Beiersdorf executive team, I was encouraged by the increasingly constructive behaviour that I was now witnessing on each of my periodic interactions with them. In order to capitalise on the progress we were making, Clynton committed to continue our partnership beyond our original contract. We decided it was now time to engage a broader audience in the leadership agenda.

3.5.7. <u>This is a big deal</u>

> I remember thinking for a panicked split second, 'why am I doing this to myself [showing my leadership data]?'Looking around the room didn't help; they had this look of 'oh, wow. That's pretty crap'. But I could also see on their faces that they were blown away by how open I was; that I was prepared to show them that I had room to improve.

In February 2006, now eighteen months into our engagement with Beiersdorf, Clynton found himself standing on a stage in front of his top 30 leaders; his executive team plus their 24 direct reports. This leadership forum was called by Clynton to formally roll-down the Leadership/Impact process to the group of 24.

Prior to Clynton, I had seen several CEOs on similar journeys have a positive impact when showing their data in a public forum of their subordinates. In the context of a leadership journey, if the CEO openly commits to improve his Circumplex, then most others will tend to follow suit. Clynton accepted this reasoning at face value but it did evoke a sense of discomfort when the forum came around, as per his reflection in the above quote. I was unaware of his discomfort at the time, and was actually somewhat surprised when he told me that this event represented such a milestone to him that it is 'burned into his psyche'.

At the time, it didn't occur to Leanne and me that Clynton would have any problem showing his Circumplex more broadly in the organisation. On reflection, I have a better understanding of the discomfort Clynton felt on that day. For ten years he had been 'Mr Nivea'. He was an expert in every part of the business, a level above his executive team and was respected and admired very widely at Beiersdorf. In this forum, he exposed his imperfections to a group of people who looked up to him. The upside of Clynton's discomfort expressed in the quote above was that he was now able to launch the Leadership/Impact process with this group very directly.

> I told them that 'no one in this organisation will be crucified for having a poor Circumplex. But you need to understand that you will be held accountable if you don't take steps to improve it.' For most of them, this just cemented the importance of being a good leader but for a couple of others it was just too confronting, and those people are no longer with our business.

In Leanne's focus groups with the members of this leadership group some months before, they had complained of not being involved enough in leading the organisation. Now, they had got their wish and it was delivered by Clynton very directly. Clynton's direct approach was very conscious as he explains below.

> It's too hard a word to say you've got to be ruthless in holding people accountable, but there is a need at some point to show people that this is a big deal, that it's a serious business imperative. I have got this on my radar. It is not just ticking the box; it is actually what I want you to talk to me about. I committed a significant sum of the company's money, so I pushed pretty hard. And by constantly allowing it to be on the agenda, it also forced me to keep it on my own personal agenda.

I had never seen a CEO deliver the accountability message with such a sharp edge before. I remember thinking that this was ironic considering Clynton's very warm and laid back nature. Having been in the room, I think it was Clynton's warmth and respect in the business that encouraged most people in the audience that day to be excited by his message, rather than fearful. Leanne, who was also present, reported a sense of nervous energy emanating from Clynton's team, who appeared to have a heighted level of engagement in the proceedings. This reaction was not surprising to Leanne and I; in fact, it was what we were driving for. We had consciously put Clynton's team in a situation where they would receive upward pressure on their leadership journeys from their direct reports, as well as downward pressure from Clynton.

When I asked Clynton to reflect on this event recently, it struck me that he had a firm understanding of the virtuous cycle of accountability that he had put in motion back then. After powering the organisation on his own for many years, it was clear that this forum marked a turning point in Clynton's mind; it was a point of no return.

3.5.8. Gathering momentum

> By engaging my executive team in the benefit of Constructive leadership, I set up an expectation of the kind of leader I aspired to be and one that they hold me accountable to. But by engaging the second level of leaders, they hold my executive team accountable as I do from another direction; and so it continues. It's like a massive snowball rolling down the hill, with me trapped in the middle.

The image of Clynton trapped in the middle of a giant snowball careering down a mountain makes me smile. Firstly, it's just a great visual. More importantly, it captures the essence of what we were trying to create at Beiersdorf; a sense that Clynton was being carried forward by the organisation rather than the other way around. Leanne's reflections on this period reinforce the shift that was beginning to occur.

> We started to see upward pressure. When Clynton's direct reports were failing to live the standards of Constructive leadership, they got that upward feedback from the Leadership Group almost immediately to help keep them on track. And I think that acted as an indirect reminder to Clynton himself. I think it really helped him stay on track in his own journey.

At the same time as accountability was flowing up from lower levels of the organisation, Clynton was exerting downward pressure and asking for greater accountability from his executive team. We had talked at length with Clynton about the need for his team to step up into the leadership roles that he had really been filling for some time, and he took this advice very seriously.

I started to get people to take their functional hats off. It became cool for the Finance Director to make a suggestion to the Sales Director. I was trying to move away from the old approaches to say how can we, collectively, do this differently? Previously I would have shut down the Finance Director if he started to stray into the Sales Director's territory.

As per Clynton's quote above, the new norm was to act as a leader of Beiersdorf Australia and New Zealand. Previously this meant focusing on your operational area of responsibility and bringing forth significant decisions for him to advise on. Brian, the Director of Sales captures this transition below.

In our organisation, Constructive leadership became a really big deal for everybody regardless of where you sat. It was taken very seriously by everybody within the business.

Clynton and the executive team remeasured their Leadership/Impact in October 2006, 16 months since their first measure, and the shifts were notable. Clynton was now having a Constructive impact even if it was still not a huge impact overall. His four Constructive styles had increased markedly but it was the reduction in his Defensive styles that really reinforced the changes he had been making. His Oppositional and Competitive styles so prevalent in the first measure had almost halved. What impressed me more was the shift in his primary focus area of Dependent; it had almost disappeared completely. In the first measure, the degree to which Clynton promoted Achievement and Dependency were roughly equal. In this second measure, his Achievement score was six times higher than his score for Dependency (see Figure 21). Needless to say these shifts encouraged Clynton greatly; he had been focused on a very simple plan and the results were there for all to see.
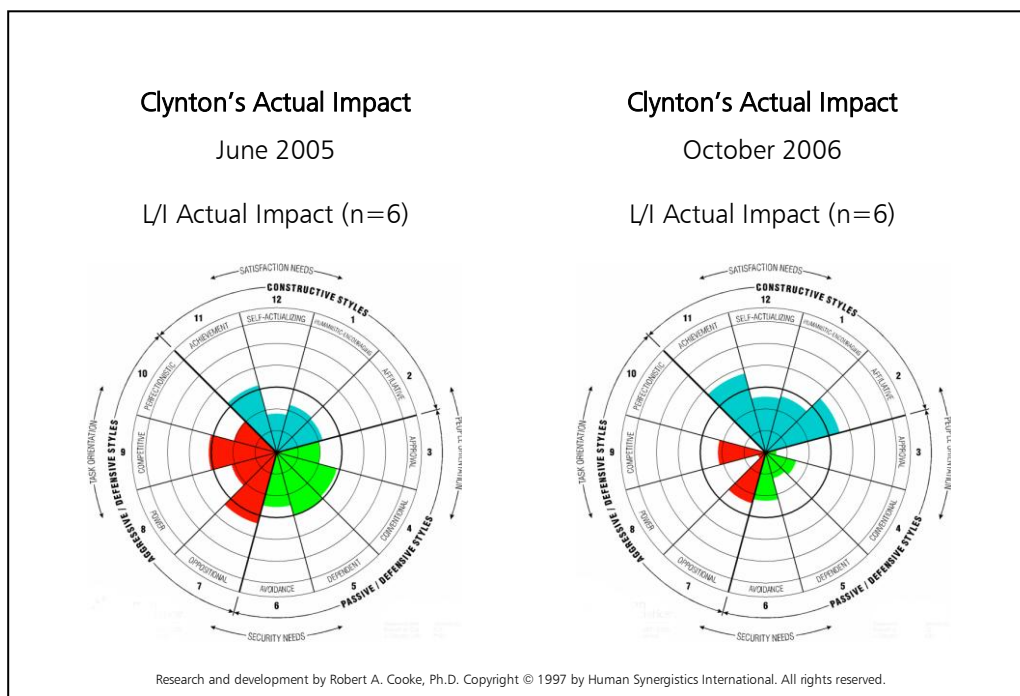
Figure 21: Clynton's Actual Impact data (2005) Vs Clynton's Actual Impact data (2006)

The shift in the impact of the executive team as a whole was also notable. The team had moved from a very Defensive impact, to one which was now far more balanced though still not Constructive. It was a

small but very significant victory for the team and Leanne told me it generated real energy and excitement to continue the journey. It was no surprise to us then, that Clynton expressed his desire to extend our engagement for another 18 months and we formalised this contract very quickly. Somewhat ironically, the leadership journey developed a real energy in late 2006 just as the business ran into the storm clouds that Clynton had predicted two years earlier.

3.5.9. A storm approaching

> I feel if we hadn't embarked on this journey before the problems hit, the old Beiersdorf would have been ripping strips off each other. Departments would have been blaming each other; people would have been working against each other to make themselves look better.

On his return from a global Beiersdorf leadership meeting in Hamburg, Clynton called a hurried meeting with Leanne and I to inform us that Beiersdorf International would shortly announce its strategic intention to sell several of its assets and become purely a skin and beauty company. For the Beiersdorf businesses around the world that were diversified beyond skincare, including Australia and New Zealand, this strategic change meant losing a big chunk of historical operating profits from 2007 and beyond. In fact, Clynton was forced to divest some of his most profitable brands. But profit wasn't the only consideration, as Clynton expresses below.

> The strategic changes didn't just have implications for profit in Australia and New Zealand; they had implications for people too. I knew we had some tough decisions to make but I wanted to make them constructively. I wanted to use these challenges to build on the culture we were creating, not destroy it.

At the time, Leanne and I knew this was a really big moment for Clynton. In our experience, handled well, this situation presented an opportunity to seriously advance Clynton's leadership journey and be used as an example of how to use Constructive leadership to create results under extreme pressure. Handled poorly, this situation could provide a barrier to his forward momentum and even derail his leadership journey altogether if he defaulted back to his more directive leadership origins.

It was apparent that Clynton understood what was at stake. Rather than go into a very directive mode of leadership, he asked Leanne to change the focus of an upcoming executive team session so that he could build a solution in partnership with his executive team. He also articulated a desire to get the broader leadership group engaged in the discussion shortly after. Leanne coached Clynton on the importance of his role in the executive team session; particularly in discouraging the group from slipping back to its old ways under pressure. Unfortunately the pressure of the moment got the better of Clynton at one stage, as he reflects below.

> I realised half way in to the session that I was actually facilitating competitive behaviour among two of my direct reports. The old me would have been comfortable believing that I was actually driving them for a better outcome, rather than actually acknowledging that what I was actually doing was not only damaging their relationship, but potentially driving that through the organisation. While it was not ideal, I caught myself and corrected the behaviour. Both of them were quite amazed that I did that and it became a powerful learning for me and the whole team.

Clynton's increasingly reflective leadership style was no accident. Both Leanne and I had been working hard at helping Clynton recognise when he got off track so that he could course correct. In the incident above, Leanne told me that Clynton caught himself very quickly and rectified the situation before she could even step in. Clynton reflected on this moment recently.

> Those prescriptive tools that you guys gave me, in regards to preparation for an interaction, forced me to bend back and say 'ok, this would have been my normal language, now what I am going to do is I am actually going to construct my language differently to get the outcome'.

Over the course of several weeks, Leanne worked with the executive team and the leadership group to create a cohesive plan which addressed the profit and people implications of the strategic challenges. Leanne and I spoke about Beiersdorf almost daily during this critical period and Leanne was regularly glowing in her praise of the way Clynton, the executive team and the leadership group handled themselves. Two things in particular struck Leanne as being significant.

> I was really impressed by the individual contribution of all leaders to the ultimate outcome; there were no passengers. But what really blew me away was the selflessness of team members who knew that their suggested actions would result in them losing their jobs.

Clynton's reflections below concur with Leanne's assessment.

> Despite the massive stakes and intense pressure, the team conducted themselves brilliantly. We came up with great solutions that kept us on track. And the business didn't miss a beat. I thought I did pretty well too.

Despite all of the challenges, Beiersdorf's performance continued to flourish. As 2008 drew to a close, Beiersdorf Australia had 11 of its 13 brands in the number one or number two positions in their respective markets. The remaining two brands were at number three and closing. Clynton had guided the organisation through a substantial leadership challenge and according to Leanne, the executive team was now functioning at a very different level; both individually and collectively. Clynton and the team approached their third measure of Leadership/Impact with a sense of optimism and confidence.

3.5.10. Walking on water

> My third measure blew my mind. I thought I was looking at my *ideal* impact! I'm very proud of the Leadership/Impact that I achieved but I find it very hard to separate my leadership journey from that of my team.

Clynton's first two measures of Leadership/Impact had demonstrated enough of a shift that I was already able to hold him up as a 'leader transformed' and include him in this research study. In fact, I had already completed two interviews with him. Now, Clynton and the Beiersdorf executive team were undertaking their third measure of Leadership/Impact and I did not even want to contemplate the consequences of a poor remeasure. I needn't have worried.

As usual, Leanne and I received the Leadership/Impact folders in our office in advance of the debrief workshop scheduled for the following week. We rummaged through the box of folders with more purpose than usual until we landed on the one marked Clynton Bartholomeusz. As we opened Clynton's

folder to the *actual* impact data, like his quote above, we mistook it for his *ideal* impact (see Figure 22). It took a few moments before we realised that we were, indeed, looking at his *actual* impact data. In a nutshell, he had eliminated his Defensive impact almost completely and his four Constructive styles averaged roughly 90%. He was now definitely having a big impact. I remember saying to Leanne that 'if his second measure qualified him as a 'leader transformed', then this third measure must have meant that he 'walked on water.'
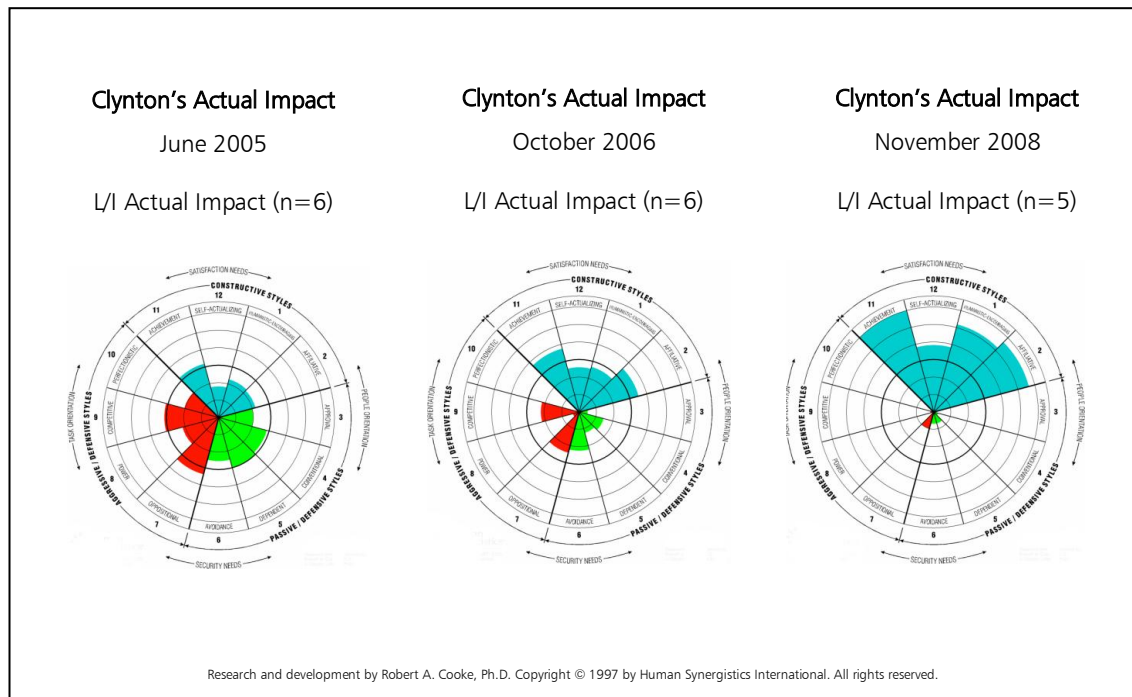
Figure 22: Clynton's Actual Impact data (2005) Vs (2006) Vs (2008)

Even more exciting for Leanne and Clynton was that the executive team had also shifted their collective impact in a big way; their predominantly Defensive impact was now a very Constructive impact. Perhaps the most remarkable feature of Clynton's journey is that his executive team membership remains exactly the same as the one he started the journey with in 2004.

I had lunch with Clynton late in 2008. With the big shifts in Leadership/Impact data still very fresh in his mind, I asked Clynton to reflect on his journey from a leader with a Defensive and quite contained impact, to a leader with a big and very Constructive impact. Specifically, I asked him to tell me the top three things that he believed had allowed him to make this shift.

> Firstly, I think you actually do have to take some time out from day-to-day business with your executive team to actually do workshops on the topic and invest in the coaching. Secondly, I have learned to listen more and speak less; that is just about catching myself in regards to my natural tendencies. Thirdly, there are a couple of my team members that I've worked with for 10 plus years. Their reinvigoration with my leadership probably gave me more impetus to keep on the journey. As a leader, gaining that feedback from your own team, especially people who you respect and you've worked with for a long time; it really helped fuel the fire for me to continue on that journey. Those are the main things.

That was it; simple, straight forward and uncomplicated. At the time, I remember thinking that Clynton's answer had none of the profundity that I thought the moment demanded. On reflection, I should not have expected anything different. From the first day Leanne and I engaged with Clynton his approach has always been simple, straightforward and uncomplicated. I also reflected in that moment on the monumental contrast between Clynton's professional journey and his personal life.

3.5.11. Organisational success amid a backdrop of personal chaos

> I would probably not use comedy as a reference to my life outside of work. I would look at it more as a bit of a tragedy; going through huge upheavals. If you think about taking yourself on a leadership journey it is probably a good thing to acknowledge to yourself that whatever is going on outside of work at times it is going to creep in, so be very conscious of that as a leader.

Over the course of the six years we have worked with Clynton so far, he has gone through an acrimonious divorce, a bitter custody battle for his two children, and the breakup of a serious relationship under the weight of conflict between his new partner and ex-wife. I know this not through office gossip or hearsay, but through countless one-on-one conversations over the years.

In fact, the primary focus of my coaching relationship with Clynton during this time has been to help him cope with the tensions in his private life such that his leadership journey stayed on course. The fact that he is happy for me to write about his private life in a story of leadership transformation is testimony to his openness and also to how closely intertwined his private and professional journeys are in his mind.

> Going through a divorce at the same time as trying to lead an organisation through change ensured two things for me. One is that I probably had to make some really tough decisions in my personal life and it skilled me for making tough decisions in the work journey. The other is that the problems in my personal life made me hyper conscious of my behaviour in the workplace; I did not want people to think my personal problems were clouding my work judgement.

In preparation for writing this narrative, Leanne and I spent many hours talking and reviewing Clynton's various interview transcripts. Our conversations drifted naturally to the manner in which we should treat Clynton's personal life. Leanne raised the idea that Clynton's challenging personal life may actually have helped his leadership transformation. I thought this was an interesting idea and we agreed to raise it with Clynton at our three person Christmas lunch in December 2009. Clynton reacted immediately to our provocation with the quote above, confirming Leanne's suspicion. He then went on to add a third reason his personal problems helped his leadership journey.

> It feels counter intuitive that personal issues can help you at work but for me, they helped me maintain my perspective. The chaos in my personal life forced me to become more reflective and considered at work. Plus I always remind people, we don't create cures for cancer. We sell beauty products.

On reflection, Leanne and I think there were three other factors that allowed Clynton to cope with his personal pressures, and even turn them to his advantage in his leadership journey. Firstly, Clynton's friendships all through the business ensured that people were always empathetic and supportive whenever he faced a major challenge or milestone at home. While he was very conscious not to let his personal problems cloud his professional judgement, he did not have to pretend that everything was perfect in his private life. Secondly, the knowledge of his personal challenges in the workplace meant that

people saw him as human and more accessible than he had been at the start of his journey when people just thought of him as 'Mr Nivea.' Finally, we believe that the chaos in his private life encouraged an extreme bias toward simplicity at work; not just as a personal preference but as a basic survival mechanism.

3.5.12. Autumn leaves

> If I was to use a metaphor to describe this journey it would be the process that leaves go through in autumn. It is a gradual change of colour, it is hardly noticeable each day but if you look at where they start and where they finish it is dramatic and it is a really pretty picture.

Clynton's metaphor for his journey captures it perfectly for me. I experienced it as a very natural and progressive process with few peaks and troughs, but a truly stunning result looking back. From the perspective of what it has been like working with Clynton and his team at Beiersdorf over the past six years, Leanne's reflection below really tells the story for me.

> The repetition and continuity of the process really wore away bad habits, both for Clynton and for the team. Clynton never questioned why we should repeatedly have measures of Leadership/Impact or why we should talk about it on an ongoing basis. The process has gone on for several years, and not everything that has been done was brand new. I never had a sense of 'we need another gimmick or another gadget'; it was more about the fact that 'this is fine-tuning'. And I think Clynton's metaphor of leaves changing colour really reflects that. He got slightly better and slightly better, there was no rush and no panic and no urgency, and I think that really helped.

3.5.13. Epilogue

Our three person lunch back in December 2009 was significant for more than just the conversation about Clynton's personal challenges in the context of his leadership journey. Because Leanne was taking six months maternity leave at Christmas, Clynton had agreed to bring the 2010 remeasure of Leadership/Impact forward to December 2009. He had become the first CEO we had ever worked with to undergo four measures of Leadership/Impact. It is unusual for us to debrief Leadership/Impact outside of a team environment. It is even more unusual to debrief it over lunch; but that's exactly what we did with Clynton. In fact, debrief is too strong a word. Basically, we opened up his folder in between three glasses of white wine to reveal an almost 'perfect' Constructive profile (see Figure 23). Clynton nodded humbly. I asked him whether he had filled in the surveys himself, then we all had a chuckle.
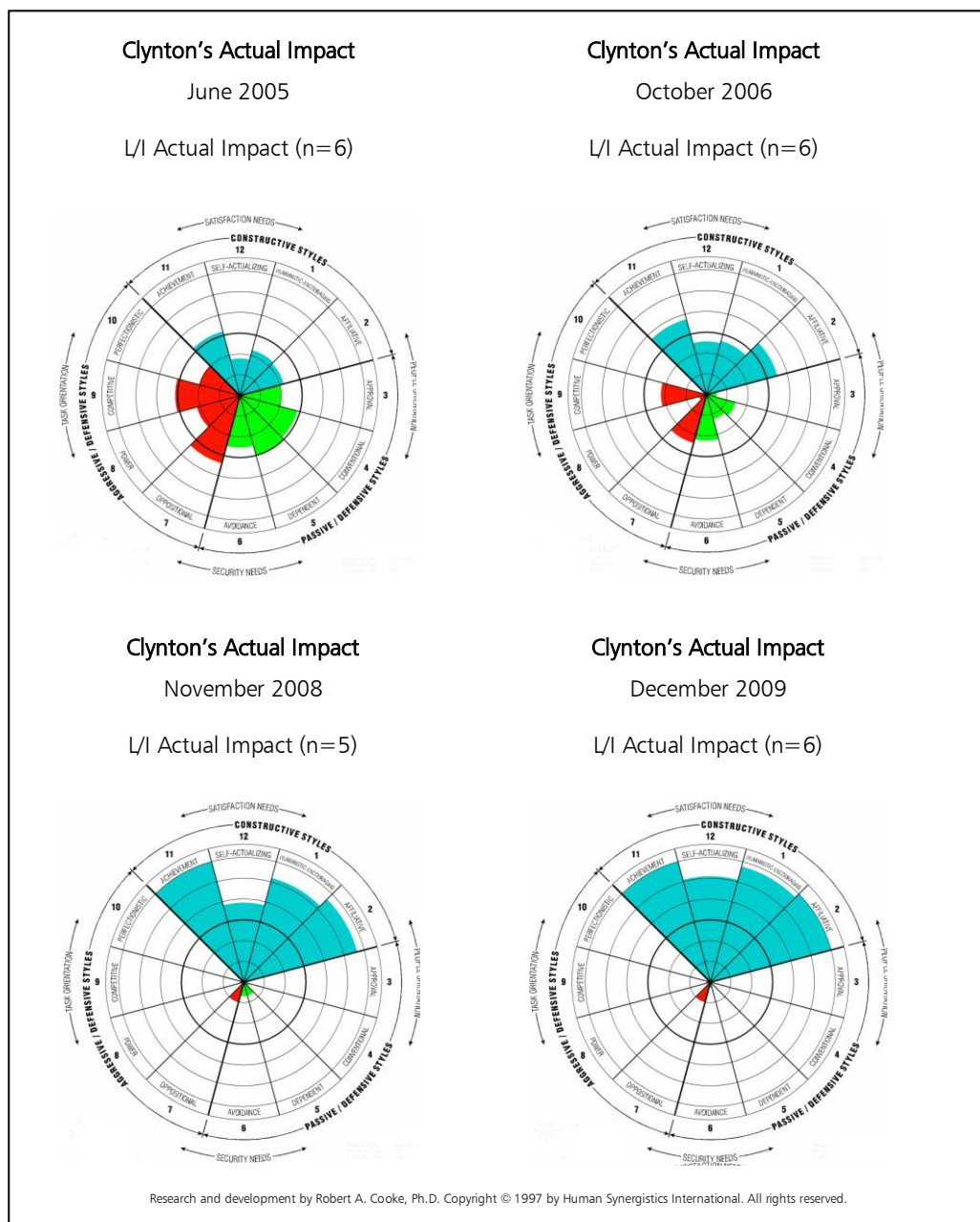
Figure 23: Clynton's Actual Impact data (2005) Vs (2006) Vs (2008) Vs (2009)

In typical Clynton style, he put the folder under the table and then opened up a conversation about what we should do together in 2010 on Leanne's return. He told us that everyone in the executive team, the same six people who began the journey with Clynton six years earlier, were all still very committed to the process and wanted to keep going, to keep improving.

As we begin 2010, and having accomplished vision 2008, Beiersdorf has set a new vision to be 'the most purchased skincare brand in Australia'. Additionally, the remeasures of Leadership/Impact for the executive team and leadership group are a 'sea of blue'. In September 2009, Clynton and I shared the stage at the 11th Australian Conference on Leadership and Culture in Sydney where he spoke powerfully about his leadership transformation. He was allocated 30 minutes. He only took 18 to enrapture the thousands of executives and change agents in the audience. After all, why make something more complicated than it needs to be? Clynton's presentation at this conference was filmed and is included in this doctoral submission as *Appendix F – DVD of CEO Presentations*.

More importantly, Clynton's very unpleasant custody battle came to a favourable conclusion in late 2009 and he now has even greater custody rights to his two beautiful young children. In fact, the greatest joy for me in Clynton's whole journey was when he told me recently that the skills he had learned with us through our engagement had helped him to navigate this very difficult process toward a great outcome.

Six years after we met, Clynton and I remain client and consultant, but also good friends. As we begin 2010, I feel very confident about the future for Clynton and Beiersdorf.

One final note on this narrative; in some ways it was the easiest to write, and in other ways it was the most difficult. As I read back over it, there is a distinct lack of 'big incidents' compared to the other six CEOs in the sample. As a result, the narrative feels measured and steady to me. But then that is exactly how I experienced Clynton's leadership journey so I guess it is wholly appropriate.

3.5.14. Clynton's reaction to reading his narrative

Reading through my story was indeed quite confronting. The reality for me is that gaining yours and Leanne's perspective gives me a greater sense of the journey and in fact explained why at times I felt so exhausted. I am glad we did this well down the track – otherwise I might have lost some momentum!

The other confronting aspect of reading the transcript was the fact that it laid out the truth in gritty chronological order. The mind has a funny way of colouring some events and reading the transcript put it back into black and white. Quite a cathartic experience!

3.6. NARRATIVE – TIM CASTREE

3.6.1. <u>Prologue</u>

If I am honest with myself, although I don't like to admit it, in the first instance my journey was more of a drama than anything else. It came about through a personal crisis; it was serious. I was in a flash point; there was a lot of conflict involved for me and with the people around me. What I have learned over the years is that I like dramas a lot less. I tend to like comedies a bit more! Maybe for the first six months my story was a drama. I think since then for me it has been much more fairytale, if I could pick the story type! It sounds a little wanky but it has been a kind of mystical and transformative experience for me. It has actually operated on a very personal level and on a very spiritual level as well. And so, I think it has turned into a bit more of a fairytale in my mind. Yeah, I think that is probably it.

3.6.2. New kid on the block

> Tim was one of the most talented young advertising guys I had met but I was worried about whether he could step-up into such a big leadership role. I thought you could help him Tim and I knew you two would hit it off.

I met Tim in late 2004. In this first interaction, he sported the swagger of a confident young Australian headhunted in New York to run the Sydney office of George Patterson Partners (GPP); an icon advertising company. Tim was introduced to me by Matt, a senior colleague of Tim's and a business acquaintance of mine. As per Matt's quote above, he was worried about Tim's capacity to handle the step-up into such a big job. Tim's rise to the Managing Director (MD) role at 33 years old had the hallmarks of a fairytale. Tim had no tertiary education and had to work his way up from the bottom. He got his start in the advertising industry in 1989 as a production assistant in the Melbourne office of Leo Burnett. His work ethic and creative flair helped him rise rapidly into senior client facing roles, eventually landing him a dream job at BBH New York, before his fairytale return to Sydney to assume his first leadership role.

In our first meeting, I recall feeling simultaneously energised and overwhelmed by Tim's passion and enthusiasm. Yet his confident swagger was undermined somewhat by a slight shortness of breath; something I attributed to him being heavy for his size. As Tim spoke he struggled to hold prolonged eye contact and referenced impressive elements of his past as though he were 'pitching' to a prospective client. I began to wonder whether he thought I might be prospective client or whether he was overcompensating for some insecurity. Either way, I was determined to get beneath the pitch.

The more I questioned Tim around his challenges, the more I began to see the fairytale unravelling, as he recalls below.

> My first few weeks were very difficult, particularly in light of rumours that GPP could be sold sometime soon. I felt that we lacked a sense of direction and the leadership of my superiors was erratic.

While he was struggling to cope with the behaviour of his superiors, he also faced the challenge of motivating his executive team and wider staff without any real leadership experience. As Tim revealed the man behind the slick advertising pitch, I became very engaged in the conversation. I really liked his rawness, his energy, and his brutal honesty. As per Matt's prediction, Tim and I really did hit it off and I felt compelled to help him. We ended the conversation with me agreeing to be a sounding board for Tim moving forward on his leadership challenges. This was easy for us because we were both tenants in the same Sydney CBD office building.

While I thought we had agreed upon an informal mentoring relationship, Tim had other ideas. Less than one week after our meeting, Tim made the short journey up two flights of stairs with a different proposition all together. He told me that he had reflected on our conversation and wanted to formalise an agenda between our organisations as soon as possible. Tim felt that he lacked the necessary guidance inside his organisation and hoped that my company and I could fill that gap for him and his executive team who were also quite young and inexperienced in their roles. Tim later reflected on what was motivating him to formalise a relationship with me.

> I definitely got kicked into this in the very first instance by a burning platform, a kind of survival instinct. The organisation needed a step-change in performance. My leadership model wasn't working for me personally, it was causing a kind of internal crisis for me.

I was surprised by Tim's urgency but delighted all the same with the prospect of having a client in the same building, the same age as me, who I already liked a lot. After several conversations to scope the need more fully, Tim and I agreed a twofold agenda for the first half of 2005. We would develop a new vision and strategy for GPP Sydney with Tim's executive team that could guide them through a period of uncertainty, and undertake a Leadership/Impact process to equip Tim's team with a higher level of leadership insight. My colleague Ron Schwartz would lead this agenda with Tim's team and I would maintain a one-on-one coaching relationship with Tim. Understanding the volatility of Tim's environment, we agreed that my immediate role would be to help Tim navigate this environment constructively. Both of us underestimated just how volatile this environment would become over the coming months.

3.6.3. A crisis of self-doubt

> I remember the last thing my boss said to me as I was walking out of his office was 'whatever the fuck you do, don't come back unless you have got this client signed, sealed and delivered'.

Our early one-on-one meetings were consumed with colourful stories of Tim's volatile interactions with his superiors. I have come to understand the incident Tim describes above as a window into some of his formative experiences and insights into leadership. Tim experienced firsthand the impact of an aggressive approach to leadership and employee motivation. The outcome of his boss' words was to shift Tim's focus from winning the client to avoiding failure.

> The sense of dread I took into that pitch, instantly my mind was thinking failure not the joys and magic of success. And in the end we didn't get this client signed, and I just remember walking back with this massive sense of dread.

These early conversations with Tim raised some concerns in my mind. Tim seemed to hold idealistic notions of leadership which put him in a regular state of disappointment with his superiors. Like many up and coming young executives, Tim initially assumed that his bosses were largely capable and confident to handle the demands of executive office.

In the lead-up to Tim's first Leadership/Impact measure, I used these examples to help him understand the concept of a leader's impact. That is, to differentiate between the intentions of his superiors versus how Tim experienced their leadership. As Tim recalls below, these early conversations served to challenge his idealistic notions about leadership.

> I started to understand that it's naive to maintain an expectation that there's going to be these – that the world at the top of these organisations at the lofty heights is just a hotbed of highly qualified, brilliant, constructive leaders. It's mostly a lot of worried, scared people running around.

As Tim began to explore the idea that his bosses weren't intentionally trying to impact him in a negative way, he began to consider the idea that his own impact might be less than ideal.

> I was really struggling with the style and impact of the people that I reported to. The natural evolution was to then explore and understand what kind of impact am I having on the people around me?

In retrospect, I think Tim's curiosity to understand his impact was aided by the contrast he perceived between his impact on others versus that of his bosses. Though Tim had not received any formal leadership feedback before, he did assume that his impact would be much better than his superiors. A short time later, he received some data that said otherwise.

> My first reaction was to reject the data because it was too far removed for me from my own self image. I was telling myself a story about what my Leadership/Impact was likely to be which was much better than was actually true.

Ron showed me Tim's Leadership/Impact data the day before he was due to debrief it with Tim and his executive team (see Figure 24). What struck me first was how heavily Tim's profile was weighted towards a 'task' orientation over a 'people' orientation. I noted that this may have something to do with the unusually low Affiliative score (below the 50th percentile) in Tim's Ideal Impact. The second thing that struck me was the very big extensions in Perfectionistic, Power and Oppositional. Tim had complained regularly to me about the chaos in his up-line environment but from his profile it appeared that he may in fact have been perpetuating this chaos by encouraging people to stay on top of every detail, build up their power base, and oppose ideas. It occurred to me that Tim was mirroring many of the behaviours that he lamented in his superiors. All in all however, it wasn't a bad first measure; the high extensions on Achievement and Self-Actualising were particularly encouraging. This made Tim's initial rejection of the data, as he recalls above, a little surprising.
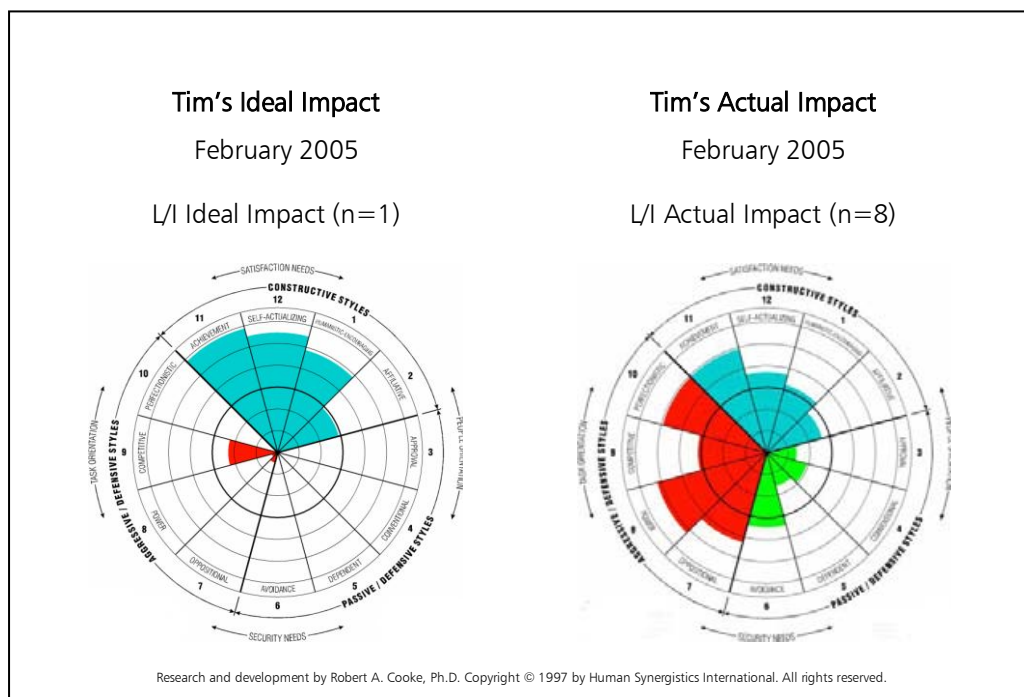
Figure 24: Tim's Ideal Impact data (2005) Vs Tim's Actual Impact data (2005)

Tim saw his Leadership/Impact data for the first time along with his executive team in the group debrief, and though he was not yet accepting of the data he showed his Circumplex to his team anyway. Ron observed many conflicting emotions in Tim on that day, as he expresses below.

> Tim was a bit defensive about his data initially, but he put a brave face on for the team. I don't think it helped that a couple of team members had better data than him. By the end of the day he seemed to be more open, though he still didn't look too happy.

Tim and I had breakfast the following week to work through his data in detail. I noticed he was a little quieter and more reflective than usual. Though Tim had let go of the defensiveness that Ron had told me about, he was still coming to terms with the data. His most difficult challenge was to reconcile the heavy task focus in the data with his self-image as a 'people-person'. Tim and I reasoned that that he was responding poorly to the short-term focus of his superiors in the lead up to a likely sale of the company. He was making decisions that put short-term cost ahead of people and the creative work he was previously so passionate about. Rather than lead through the turbulent environment in a proactive manner, Tim had adopted somewhat of a victim mentality as expressed by Perry, one of Tim's executive team members below.

> I think Tim classed himself as a bit of a victim because he felt that others were forcing him to do things that he didn't necessarily want to do. However, he chose to take that role, and he chose to do certain things that were asked of him. And I think he was probably a bit naive to think that the rewards would come without a price. Personally I would say that he was behaving in a way that was inconsistent with the way he wanted to behave.

Somewhat provocatively, I tested two theories on Tim in order to challenge his thinking. Firstly, I suggested that he was not a victim of his environment; rather he was making choices everyday which culminated in his impact. Secondly, I proposed that he was modelling some of the very behaviours that he deplored in his superiors. Tim accepted my provocations as he expresses below.

> I was struggling to be honest. I was facing questions every day, and I felt like I had reached the limitations of what my natural toolset was. I was quite a bit lost. I really didn't know my arse from my elbow. I was very naive, had unrealistically high expectations of the people around me. I was reacting to those influences in a way that made me act like they did.

For my part, I felt that the Leadership/Impact measure had become a catalyst for Tim to unload the insecurities he had been carrying to that point. In the weeks following the Leadership/Impact feedback, Tim dropped his defences and our conversations became very open and very personal. Tim recalls the anxiety he felt in trying to lead his organisation at the same time as he was experiencing a crisis of confidence.

> So to have this positional power, to have people looking to your leadership in stormy seas to be calm and provide you with guidance, and to be on the other hand going through a crisis of self doubt and to be going through a bit of internal turmoil I found that a really difficult position to be in.

In a recent discussion with Tim, he revealed that a large part of his internal conflict at that time emanated from the severe disruption to his self-image that he had experienced in the first months of his very first leadership role.

> I've always been one of these sorts of fast-track people then suddenly I was in a very different job where I felt a lot more direct pressure. I'd look around me and I'd say 'well hang on a minute, why are you asking me these questions, why can't you be more reasonable?' And really struggling to reconcile that with the image I had of myself just weeks and months before, as 'Tim the up and comer', 'golden boy', 'can do no wrong', 'go Tim go', you know, this sort of thing.

While I admired Tim's openness and extreme humility, I was very conscious that his self-image had been shattered and his confidence was probably at an all time low. My number one priority became to help Tim craft a strong leadership identity that could enable him to move forward.

3.6.4. The blueprint

> I believe I have been put on this earth to have a big and authentic life; that is to make a meaningful contribution to many different people in many different ways. I'm here to bring out the best in the people around me through the living and evangelizing of my values; integrity, candour, humility, and open-mindedness.

Before Tim, I had played around with various tools and approaches to help leaders articulate their aspirations. Tim's situation encouraged me to integrate all of these approaches into a disciplined process which could help him uncover his purpose, values, beliefs, and goals for his professional and personal life. The process was documented in a simple question and answer template on each of these subjects, which is the source of Tim's words above.

Tim engaged with this process wholeheartedly. I think it was less a reflection of my template and more a reflection on Tim's readiness and enthusiasm to create a 'blueprint' that could take him forward. It also felt very good to both of us to move beyond the pain and drama of the preceding few months and create something that was energising for both of us.

Through this process of exploration, Tim had the revelation that not only was his *actual* impact at odds with his *ideal* impact, but the feedback he received was also at odds with what was most important to him in life. Tim talks about 'bringing out the best in people', yet his Leadership/Impact feedback suggested he was driving a strong security orientation in those around him as measured by the high levels of Opposition and Avoidance in his profile. It also became clear to Tim and I that his personal standards of behaviour were at odds with his desire to lead a 'big and authentic life'. In one section of the template, Tim listed what he thought would inhibit him from achieving his personal aspirations.

> What would hold me back is my tendency toward disorganisation and procrastination. I will know it is important to do something out-side my comfort zone but I'll find an excuse not to do it.

Tim told me that he was very committed to his new blueprint and that he wanted me to hold him accountable to it. I understood this to be a pivotal moment in our coaching relationship; it was a chance for us to establish what 'hold me accountable' meant to Tim. I asked him if this meant that he wanted me to give him very direct feedback when I saw him get off course, or whether he would prefer a more warm and cuddly approach. Tim was adamant that I should do whatever I needed to do in order to keep him on course.

Only a couple of weeks later he presented me with my first opportunity to test his commitment to his blueprint very directly, and he recalls this moment below.

> I can see myself - I was much heavier than I am now, I was running up the stairs, my tie was skew-if; I was sweating when I got to the top of the stairs. I was huffing and puffing from my haul up the stairs. I sat down in your office and you were pretty much like 'geez just look at yourself; have a good look at yourself. Your tie is all skew-if; you look exhausted and completely disorganised. I mean how is anyone meant to take you seriously as a leader when you look like you are running around with your arse on fire?'

My very confronting intervention was not one that I had planned and though Tim recalls it favourably, I do remember feeling some regret at the time. Two of my mottos are to be 'respectfully fearless' and 'humbly confident' but I suspect I behaved in a way that was neither respectful nor humble. In hindsight I believe Tim trusted that I had his best interests at heart and was trying to deliver on our earlier agreement to hold him accountable. What Tim does not say above is that this incident occurred just five minutes before he was to address a large gathering of staff members on the future vision and strategy of the organisation. The high stakes and urgency of the situation encouraged me to be a little more direct than I might otherwise have been. Recently, Tim recalled the impact of this intervention on him.

> What I got was a direct dose of reality at just the right time which was really interruptive and the power of that for me is that it just quickly changed the power dynamics between me and you. It just changed the power dynamics in our conversation so that I felt very chastised in a healthy way and just sort of had my level reset through that.

Though I did not fully appreciate it at the time, Tim subsequently told me that I had behaved unlike his mental model of how a consultant should behave by speaking 'truth' to a person paying the bills regardless of the potential consequences. It resonated with him because he aspired to speak directly, fearlessly and truthfully with his clients and superiors and did not feel he was doing so at that point in time. He also appreciated that I had helped him to make a connection between his physical state and his impact as a leader.

> The power of those coaching interventions - you really inserted yourself in my mind quite aggressively. I honestly believe, and I don't think I am exaggerating, left to my own devices, I really think it would have taken me fifteen years to never to make the changes that those interventions created in a couple of profound giant strides.

As Tim stopped to see himself from my vantage point, he realised that he was projecting physical and emotional chaos to the world. It was following this intervention that Tim started making significant changes in his personal life in an attempt to decrease the chaos and increase his sense of health, vitality and mindfulness. He joined his wife Kristen in her daily practice of yoga, renewed his faith, began meditating, and started bring a healthy packed lunch to work every day.

It was around this time where I experienced a subtle but significant shift in our relationship; Tim began to engage with me less as a leadership coach and more as a role model for what he wanted his professional life to look like.

3.6.5. 'Peter Yoda' and the dark side of guru status

> Not having a uni degree has historically created in me a sense of, a slight inferiority complex in the business space around that lack of formal education. So that in a sense creates extra hurdles and things for me to overcome as it relates to my self-image. The positive flipside of that is that it has just made me a very voracious learner.

As Tim says above, his lack of tertiary education made him very open to learning. It also made him very open to my influence. This was a period in time where I had expanded my own development beyond conventional academic and business literature to personal development, spirituality, positive psychology and quantum physics. As a result, I had a very wide range of resources available to Tim which he consumed voraciously, as he expresses below.

> I didn't read a piece of fiction. Everything was just this fierce consumption of leadership, coaching, business, and self help sort of books and there was a lot of valuable stuff in there. It was a very profound confluence of personal and professional needs for new models, new ways of working, new tools, new skills and in that sense it touched every facet of my life at the time in a very positive but also in a highly and very disruptive way as well.

I recall this time as exhilarating and exciting for both of us; Tim was the first CEO to that point who shared my passion for learning and self-development to such an extreme extent. Our interactions became very frequent in nature and very personal for both of us as Tim wanted to explore my own experiences, values and beliefs in the context of his own journey. Despite the joy that I experienced in our interactions, I began to feel quite uncomfortable and conflicted by the esteem in which Tim was holding me. As he recalls below, this esteem went a little too far.

> I was in awe of you, I was in awe of what you knew, I was in awe of how you put it in action, and so in a way I was like 'I've really got to get some of that, I need that influence in my life'. I would definitely just channel you, use your words, use your themes, use your language.

Reading Tim's words above is an uncomfortable experience for me such that I seriously contemplated leaving this passage out. Not because it is immaterial to Tim's journey but because it feels extremely self-serving. What must be said is that Tim is not at all uncomfortable expressing these thoughts which I suspect only adds to my discomfort.

The moment I knew that Tim's esteem for me had gone too far was when one of his team members informed me that he had nick-named me *Peter Yoda* – a play on my surname. I presumed Tim gave me this nickname because he found me to be wise as opposed to short, grotesque and incomprehensible; though I never got a straight answer on this from him.

At the time, I was conscious that Tim did not have many leadership role models in his environment nor did he have many people who aligned with his values of 'integrity, candour, humility, and open-mindedness'. Through recent discussions with Tim I have come to learn that this lack of role models encouraged him to model me. As Tim recalls, it wasn't the most effective strategy.

> I definitely noticed when I was mimicking you that way I was a lot less successful at inspiring people with these thoughts, these concepts, these tools, and these learnings. I was definitely less effective with

it than when it became my own but you know still that was a process I had to go through to make it my own. It wasn't false back then in the sense that I really was passionate about what I was learning. But I think as my own voice developed, I got more authentic in my own delivery of these concepts.

While Ron and I observed Tim make some progress with his impact over the months we had been working together, Tim's environment became increasingly at odds with the changes that he was trying to effect. A sale of GPP was now imminent and Tim's role was largely consumed by responding to due diligence requests rather than personal and organisational growth. As the pressure of Tim's environment intensified, so too did his insecurities.

3.6.6. <u>Moving beyond fear and paranoia</u>

> I waned between strong self-confidence and no confidence at all. I waned between strong motivation and disinterest. I rarely found that steady-state of stability, emotional predictability and increasing achievement. I feared the potential self-destruction that could come with it.

In August 2006, GPP was acquired by one of the world's largest marketing services organisations. As per Tim's quote above, this event reignited his insecurities about his leadership capability. Tim also presumed that the new environment, which would understandably be focused on gaining cost efficiencies from the merged companies, would not be conducive to our leadership agenda he was now so vested in.

As the new environment consumed Tim, he lost much of the personal discipline that he had been putting in place. He exacerbated an already challenging situation by becoming increasingly defensive outwardly and increasingly paranoid privately. Our conversations became less frequent, less purposeful, and more reactive to the many dramas Tim perceived. This mounting tension reached its climax at a one-on-one session urgently arranged by Tim where he expressed a real conviction that his job was in jeopardy, as he recalls below.

> I came up to you and said, 'mate, they are not returning my phone calls, they are not doing this, they are not doing that, they are cutting me out. They are going to shaft me mate, this is what they are going to do. What am I going to do, I am fed up. I have had enough; I am going to walk away.'

I had developed a strong empathy for Tim and the situation in which he found himself, but I also felt that it was time for him to take responsibility for his part in the drama and stop the complaining that had become a regular feature of our one-on-one meetings. I was also frustrated that my coaching had not yet prepared him to cope constructively with this situation. Rather than provide Tim with another bout of very direct feedback, I resolved to try and help him see how he was perpetuating the drama in his own mind. Tim recalls this conversation below.

> You just sat me down and you got out the white board and you said, 'ok, well before you go running for the exit, tell me what happened again. They didn't return a phone call, they didn't return this email, they didn't do this, and they didn't do that.' And you drew a line, and said, 'so your analysis of that says they are trying to fuck you over, shaft you and screw you because that's what they do.' And you said, 'ok, well let's park that for one minute. Now let's come up with six other things that could be reasons why they haven't called you back.' Just like that you created an instant interruption to the story I was telling myself. And we wrote it up. And well, they are very busy, they are dealing with a merger, they are dealing with, you know all these other things that we came up with. And you just said to me, 'look, maybe they are trying to shaft you but you have six other reasons as to what could be going on

so odds are, you are going to be wrong. So why don't you just pick the reason that they haven't called you back that you find most empowering and most useful.'

I have included the long passage above because it was a turning point in Tim's leadership journey.

> That was a really big moment. I use that model all the time. I literally, since I have been given that model, I have never once, I dare say, dropped into a crisis that was the making of my own crazy mind just spiralling out of control. It just doesn't happen anymore because of that model.

In the following months, I watched Tim become proficient with attaching an empowering meaning to the events of his personal and professional life. This capability proved a real asset to Tim as he endeavoured to make sense of his new world with its many pressures and personal uncertainties, as he recalls below.

> I had to start seeing the people I was interacting with in a different light – I developed empathy for them. I came to realise that these people that were driving me mad – that's not their intention; they didn't wake up this morning and think 'hey how can I make Tim's life miserable today?' So I had to realise that they were going through their own struggles and develop empathy for what they were going through. It sounds small, but that was really important to me.

After 12 months as the MD of GPP in Sydney, and four months after the new owners arrived, Tim and the new owners agreed to restructure the Sydney office and part company. This was a constructive solution on Tim's part to solve the problem of having two executives for the same role as head of the newly merged agency in Sydney. I watched Tim use his more empowering mindset to navigate this very difficult situation amicably. What really impressed me at the time was Tim's ability to agree a dignified exit, without the safety net of a new role to go to and with minimal reliance on me. I felt our relationship was stronger than ever and lacked the dependence that was present earlier. Tim also had a very stabilising influence in his wife, Kristen who helped him through this period.

> She has such intimate knowledge of me as a person and with her it was this combination of a total acceptance of what I was trying to achieve and honesty with me when my natural tendencies would take me backwards. And the other thing she was really great at is that she would really counsel patience and self acceptance.

From the very first time I met Kristen, I felt she would be a huge asset on Tim's journey. She understood the advertising world Tim lived in because she had been an executive in this industry herself when they met in New York. Perhaps more importantly, Kristen had a strong interest in personal development and a keen interest in physical and spiritual wellbeing. With Kristen's encouragement, Tim resumed his personal disciplines of exercise, meditation, healthy eating and spiritual practice with renewed vigour.

Only four weeks after his exit from GPP and before his 35th birthday, Tim secured the role of Australian CEO for Leo Burnett, one of the world's most respected advertising companies. Tim expressed to me with great passion how he felt Leo Burnett represented the personal and professional opportunity that he had been looking for. He was also excited by the prospect of reengaging together in the new environment without the uncertainty present in the GPP environment.

In the three months between finishing at GPP and starting his new job at Leo Burnett, Tim and I maintained regular contact and he spoke about his sense of 'unfinished work' with regards to his

Leadership/Impact. During the recruitment process, Tim had won over his future employers with talk of his vision for leadership which balanced getting the job done with the needs of people. Tim's new chairman Neville was so taken with this dialogue that Tim arranged a meeting between the three of us for January 2006, one month before Tim started in the CEO role. Prior to Tim's succession into the CEO role, Neville himself had held this position for the previous three years. Neville was greatly respected for having restored the company's creative reputation and balance sheet position after it suffered losses in the previous years.

Neville was very engaged in our conversation and I understood why Tim was so excited about his new environment. We agreed in principle to formalise an engagement that would coincide with Tim's commencement in the CEO role. The first three months of this engagement would focus on refreshing the strategy for Leo Burnett and building a scorecard to measure the strategy. But what Neville and Tim were most keen on was to conduct a measure of Leadership/Impact with the executive team. In fact, Neville was so keen on this process that he wanted to personally participate. This measure would be conducted in April, after Tim had been in the CEO role for three months and the team had had some time to work together on a strategic agenda.

3.6.7. Making Progress

> Thank God I didn't go backwards. I was really hoping I had made some progress but I wasn't sure. The Perfectionism score was still very high but I was pleased to be doing much better on the people side of things.

As per Tim's quote above, he was quite relieved to make some progress on his second measure, as judged by a new group of respondents. Although his profile was far from ideal, he had made some strides from his first measure such that his Constructive impact now dominated his Aggressive impact (see Figure 25). Even more importantly for Tim, he had achieved his targeted gains in the styles of 'Humanistic' and 'Affiliative', and his targeted reductions in 'Power' and 'Oppositional' proving to himself that he could balance the dimensions of task and people.

While much of Tim's leadership journey at GPP revolved around counselling sessions between he and I behind closed doors, in the weeks following Tim's Leadership/Impact debrief at Leo Burnett he engaged his entire staff in his leadership agenda.

> I got people to collude in my grand plan. The first thing I did was send a signal to people that there was a gap between the impact I wanted to have and the impact I was actually having. I am sure through that exchange alone I made percentage point increases in my impact. Because then they had a different story to tell themselves. They are not like 'hey, Tim's a Perfectionistic asshole who just wants everything done his way.' They are like 'oh, Tim doesn't mean to have that impact on me, he wants to move'.

Tim's Actual Impact
February 2005
L/I Actual Impact (n=8)

Tim's Actual Impact
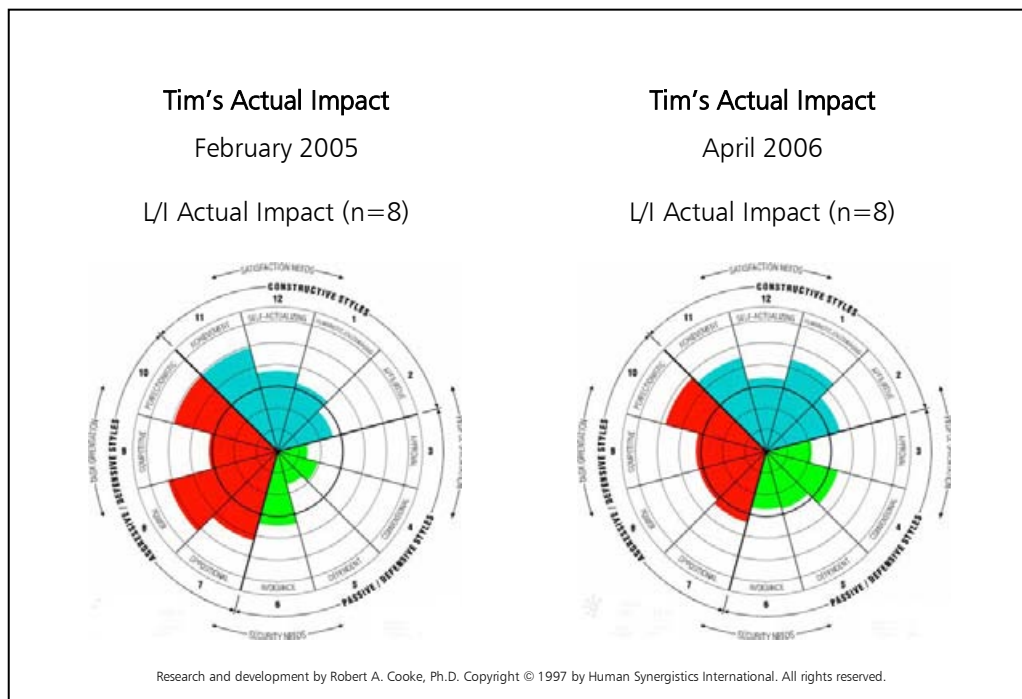April 2006
L/I Actual Impact (n=8)

Figure 25: Tim's Actual Impact data (2005) Vs Tim's Actual Impact data (2006)

Coming from a marketing background, I think Tim intuitively recognised the importance of good publicity in building momentum and encouraging positive perception. Rather than provide 'evidence for the prosecution', Tim was able to generate 'benefit of the doubt'. He was also just excited to share his passion for leadership with anyone who was interested.

Tim's commitment to improving his impact went beyond just encouraging positive perception. I sat in on many staff engagement forums where Tim would ask his people right down to the front-line to hold him accountable to the changes that he intended to make. Tim recalls one of these sessions below.

> I would just say it out loud. 'This is what I have learned, this is what I am trying to do, here is what I am planning to do about it and if I do anything with you, this team, in any situation that has a poor impact on you I just ask you to call me on it on the spot. Even if it means you are pulling me up twelve times a day I don't mind. I just want to hear about it on the spot.' I am not sure how I could have actually made some of the changes I made without that level of transparency.

Working in an industry that was renowned more for its creative focus rather than its leadership practices, I watched Tim's staff, many of whom were very young, engage with his agenda positively. Tim told me that he measured the success of these staff engagement forums by the quantity of feedback he received afterward from staff at all levels. Sometimes this feedback was positive encouragement but often it was constructive criticism. A common theme in the feedback was that Tim's obsession to maintain the highest standards of strategic and creative excellence resulted in him controlling work he should be delegating. He also set standards that his staff could not live up to. Tim and I made a conscious effort to address this feedback using various leadership strategies in the following months.

3.6.8. Flipping his mindset

> It's a bit of a flip in mindset, for me as the CEO, seeing all of those organisational resources to support me, my ambition, my agenda, what I'm trying to do; flipping that around to saying 'right, as the CEO of my organisation, I'm here to support and enable a lot of other people to achieve the goals of the organisation'.

One thing that helped to 'flip Tim's mindset' was industrial psychologist Norman Maier's concept of $ED = Q \times A$; an effective decision equals the quality of the decision times the acceptance of the decision. Coming into the leadership role from a marketing and client management background, Tim had been very focused on the 'Q'. After many conversations on this topic, the revelation for Tim was that a decision quality of 10 multiplied by a decision acceptance of 2 achieved a 20% level of decision effectiveness.

> The biggest thing I did around the leadership strategy of Influencing was really open up the decision making process. I think before this I used to spend a lot of time thinking about the quality of my thinking. I used to spend hours working through problems by myself, coming up with very strategic answers to various challenges and questions, organise it all on beautiful charts, very high quality. But I did none of the work around gaining acceptance around those decisions.

Once Tim came to grips with this simple concept, he stopped intellectualising leadership and found practical applications in his everyday environment for the ideas he was learning.

> I used to go into a team session where we would be trying to solve a problem with the solution already in my mind. And I would spend a lot of time then trying to sort of rally the people, or cajole them, or force them into the outcome that I had already arrived at. I stopped doing that. I detached from that and let the process take its own course and let the people have much more input and say. And sometimes that would result in doing things that were very different than the ones I had come up with myself.

Tim's efforts to be more open to the influence of others were noted by his colleague Perry, who followed Tim from GPP to Leo Burnett. He speaks about the contrast in Tim's leadership between the two different organisations below.

> He is now far more giving of empowerment down the line, and he will delegate in an environment of trust in the sense that he will say to somebody 'this is what needs to be done, I know you can do it'. There's a huge level of trust there.

Another exercise that Tim and I undertook during this period was to review his diary to see how much time he was spending in a mentoring role with his people. Tim saw an opportunity to increase his focus in this area as he recalls below.

> I found I was spending only 10-15% of my time on talent. I ramped that up to about 50% after going through the Leadership/Impact process for a second time. I spent high quality one-on-one time with the executive team but also the next tier of management down and then a couple of juniors in the business I actually took on as high-potentials.

As Tim became more proficient in implementing the strategies that we had devised together, he found ways to bring his creative insight to his leadership agenda. The most memorable application of this for me was when Tim devised a reward strategy that reinforced the organisation's values and strategic initiatives called the '90 day champion.'

> This was where my team and I would pick an organisational value or one of our strategic initiatives. Every 90 days we would award someone with a medal and a trip to somewhere in Australia. We just took money out of the executive team travel budget for the global team pow-wow. We would give the criteria to all the staff and ask them to vote for who was most deserving.

The above three examples represent Tim's very purposeful application of three Leadership/Impact strategies that we had identified as important in shifting his impact; Influencing, Mentoring and Reinforcing. As Tim outlines below, he was able to employ the various strategies more and more intuitively over time.

> At first, I would work down the list [of leadership strategies] one action at a time and I would have very specific actions and goals against most of the ten strategies. By the time I had worked with the tool for a year or so, it became much more intuitive. But still once every three or four months, it is on my pin board, right, so I will still turn around and look at it and just skim down the list and say what am I missing? What else could I be doing?

Tim's first anniversary in the CEO role at Leo Burnett coincided with the organisation returning to a healthy profit for the first time in six years. 2006 also marked the year that Leo Burnett was awarded the prestigious title of Advertising Agency of the Year. More important to Tim however, was that he was experiencing greater alignment between his work environment and his personal aspirations.

3.6.9. A big and authentic life

> At the same time I was going through my leadership journey really developed a deep connection with yoga. And so the meditation, the sort of integration of physical and mental and spiritual health, the way it teaches you around a personal centeredness turned out to be just a massive influence. Losing a lot of weight, getting fit, getting healthy, getting organised. My attempts to master these sorts of things were all part of one journey not separate journeys.

What Tim articulates above, and what I certainly experienced participating in Tim's journey, was that it involved wholesale and holistic change across almost all aspects of his personal and professional life. In the second year of his leadership at Leo Burnett, Tim found a way to connect his work more directly with his aspiration to live 'a big and authentic life'.

In early 2007, Tim became one of three founding directors of Earth Hour; an initiative designed to raise awareness of climate change by getting Sydney's residents to turn off their lights for one hour at 7.30pm on March 31st. In order to achieve this outcome, Tim had to engage and influence a very disparate group of stakeholders including the media, big business, politicians, and the general public. I was inspired by Tim's purposefulness during this period and so were many others. 2.5 million Sydneysiders participated in the event including the Prime Minister's residence. In recognition of this extraordinary result, Leo Burnett Australia was awarded the Titanium Award at the 2007 Cannes Advertising Awards, which is considered to be the most prestigious advertising award in the world.

Tim's success with Earth hour put his name up in lights on a global stage. Around this time, he and Kristen began thinking seriously about returning to Kristen's homeland of America to start their family. In January 2008, Tim announced that he would be handing the CEO reigns of Leo Burnett over to one of his executive team members, Tony. Shortly after, Tim accepted the role of Executive Vice President and

Managing Director for MediaVest, one of the world's largest media companies, based in New York. Though I was ecstatic for Tim, I was very disappointed that we would not get a chance to remeasure his Leadership/Impact in the Leo Burnett environment. In my observation, and those of his colleagues, Tim had made great strides in the previous two years and it would have been great to capture this sentiment in quantitative data.

3.6.10. <u>From white belt to yellow belt</u>

> I've learned a lot about leadership by watching Tim on his journey. And he has been a really, really good role model, for both good and bad, because he is just a normal person finding his way. You know, he has his issues like all of us, but he is genuine in his – if you cut out the bull-shit language and the tool sets and the way of doing it, underneath he's a really good man and wants to make a really positive impact and a difference, and he lives his life like that, and I'm glad to have him around.

Tim's successor Tony really captures the essence of Tim's journey for me. Tim allowed people to see him for who he was, good and bad. His journey was imperfect yet genuine and inspiring to others. As far as Tim is concerned, his journey is far from complete. When I asked him to reflect on his journey upon leaving Leo Burnett he answered with the very humble passage below.

> I think I'm still integrating the principles and concepts of Constructive leadership into my day to day interactions...So you'd like to get to the point where this nice Constructive style becomes like breathing but I doubt I'll ever get there. It's like any art; I think there's a journey... And it's nice that I was a white belt, and I'm really glad that I've become a yellow belt. I'm looking forward to being a black belt.

3.6.11. Epilogue

The positive trajectory in Tim's personal and professional life continues to gather momentum. At the time of writing this narrative, Tim and Kristen have just celebrated the first birthday of their baby daughter Parker, in their newly renovated Manhattan warehouse apartment.

After two successful years at MediaVest, Tim was recently promoted to a global leadership role in this media giant. I recently met the global CEO of MediaVest on a visit to Chicago who told me, unprompted, that Tim is 'an exceptional talent and a born leader.'

In the three years since Tim helped to found Earth Hour, its momentum as a social change initiative has escalated beyond Tim's wildest dreams. In 2010, 1.5 billion people around the world turned off their lights.

In June 2010, as part of his transition to the global leadership role at MediaVest, we conducted another Leadership/Impact measure for Tim to capture his impact in this environment over the previous two years (Figure 26). When Tim saw the results, he responded with his trademark humility saying that 'maybe now I'm a green belt.'

I was really pleased for Tim because I felt this data captured the many positive changes that he made when we partnered together at Leo Burnett, and the many more positive changes he had obviously made on his own over the past two years at MediaVest.
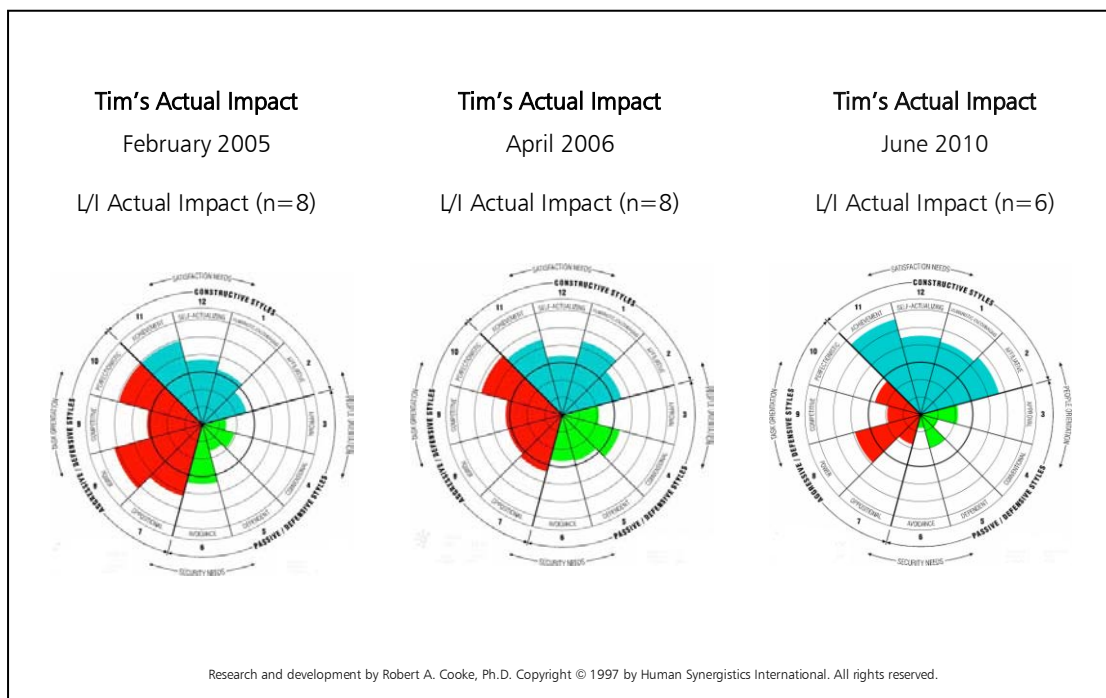

Figure 26: Tim's Actual Impact data (2005) Vs (2006) Vs (2010)

Having recently spent time with Tim and Kristen in New York, and having Tim's turbulent journey top of mind, I am struck by the physical and emotional contrast with the man described at the beginning of this story. Perhaps even more significant was the new found equilibrium in our relationship. I'm certain that he added more value to my thinking this time around than I did to his. As the shackles of our former teacher-student relationship were broken, there was a sense of ease and quiet confidence in our many conversations that I do not recall being there before. I left feeling extremely calm and confident about the next chapter of Tim's journey, no matter what life throws at him.

Perhaps the ultimate proof of Tim's transformation is the openness, candour, grace and good humour with which he has approached this research project; surely a sign of true strength and congruence if ever there was one.

3.6.12. <u>Tim's reaction to reading his narrative</u>

The narrative resonated with me deeply. It absolutely captures both the context and content of my journey over the last 4-5 years. And after reading it I'm struck that it's a difficult job to distil that down in the narrative form. I also enjoyed reading the glimpses of your own reactions to our interactions and your own evolution as a CEO coach - that was new to me. I also like how it captures this process (at least for me) as an iterative journey with no specific destination where one arrives at "leadership guru-dom". It makes me want to re-test in my new environment. It also accurately conveys the personal/ emotional under-current that was in play for me during these times - I wasn't expecting that - although I should have given their role in this process. So, in short, I'm delighted with the authenticity of the story told here. (Kristen is reading it now!)

3.7. NARRATIVE – PAUL TIMMINS

3.7.1. Prologue

I had always thought of my journey as an epic, but now with time to reflect I feel it is more an epic drama involving plenty of conflict as I approached the various stages in the evolution of my leadership. The drama involved my personal leadership, the leadership of my team, the leadership of the company and the leadership of my superiors. Through all of these areas of my leadership there were varying levels of conflict which gave the drama its highs and lows. This drama of leadership transformation was able to turn into an epic due to the overlay of the financial turnaround of the business. So it is an epic drama with a very happy ending, one which I am very happy to be a part of.

3.7.2. <u>The changing of the guard, again...and again.</u>

> The company was losing millions and I had the chance to get my first MD role. I had seen troubled companies before, and I could certainly smell disaster in the air. I knew I would be going to hell and back while fixing this mess. One of my first considerations was whether I should transfer my assets into my wife's name.

I met Paul in 2005 at the annual Getronics Sales Conference. He had just been appointed to the role of Acting Managing Director in Australia for the struggling Dutch IT services company, having been recruited to the position of Finance Director only six weeks earlier. Paul made a huge impact on me; literally. I had never met a six foot eight Elvis impersonator before. Paul had been talked into wearing an Elvis suit at this conference by a very persuasive colleague who surmised that the organisation needed some light relief. I remember thinking at the time that this was an interesting paradox; a finance guy, with his company in a dire financial situation, dressed in tight white lycra in an attempt to connect with his people.

Beneath the light relief, Paul looked like a man with a huge weight on his considerable shoulders. The business was under pressure to perform; a large hole existed in the financial forecasts that could not be easily explained to a demanding parent in Amsterdam. Paul, because he was presumed to have the necessary financial skills to rescue the company, was unexpectedly thrust into the leadership role by his superiors in Amsterdam. It was not an attractive job offer, as Paul later reflected.

> I had just joined as the new Finance Director. Six weeks later I was made Acting Managing Director, which meant I was Getronics Australia's third MD in 12 months. To compound the situation, all the Senior Leadership Team bar two were brand new. I was wondering how in hell I was going to turn the company around. I knew one thing for sure – I definitely needed more than an Elvis suit.

Getronics Australia had been a client of mine for almost two years before Paul accepted the Acting Managing Director role. In 2003, I had contracted with Paul's predecessor's predecessor David, on a leadership and organisational change agenda designed to accelerate the company's growth agenda. David was concerned that the organisation's culture was too passive; specifically, that it lacked the pride and passion required for it to grow in a competitive marketplace. I assumed I was entering a long-term engagement with a stable MD. I did not bargain on the leadership and financial turmoil that I soon found myself in the middle of. David lasted a little over a year before falling out with Amsterdam and his successor Brian lasted only five months before suffering the same fate.

Despite two MDs falling by the wayside, ironically my engagement with Getronics Australia continued. I put this down to the well respected People and Culture Director Ivan, who saw our engagement as a pathway out of the turmoil. Additionally, there was significant commitment among middle management to the change process we had begun. When Paul took the reins, he realised that any attempt to stop the engagement would have disenfranchised this group so he agreed to keep it going.

At the time, I felt that Paul and I were both on a tightrope. The stakes were obviously high for Paul, and my credibility was inevitably linked to his success. Paul's career to date had been narrowly based on a series of finance roles; he'd had no formal training in management or leadership prior to his appointment at Getronics.

> None of my leadership development was formal, it was really just learning through observing others. So I saw this engagement as a tremendous opportunity to accelerate my own development and prepare me for the challenges that I knew lay ahead in this turnaround. It was quite a personal ambition of mine.

In my private moments, I wondered whether Paul had the capability to lead successfully in such a difficult environment. I didn't see anything in his background that prepared him for the situation in which he found himself. Paul lacked any professional grooming for the leadership role as he explains below.

> I was brought up on a farm in Condobolin, in outback NSW. My leadership style had evolved from this family upbringing as one of seven children, from the way my parents conducted themselves, from the way my father led us as a family. Then there was my boarding school background, where I felt I learnt some more about leading from the Marist Brothers and from captaining the various sporting teams.

Paul's up-line environment proved a significant challenge for our engagement at Getronics during this period, as Ivan recalls below.

> There was a constant pressure from Amsterdam for short-term results that was very consuming for Paul and our executive team. Often it was impossible to find the head space to focus on new approaches to leadership.

Despite these challenges, Paul managed to prioritise the leadership agenda. I understood that Paul needed me to help him cope with his new role, and I also suspected that Paul thought I would increase his chances of getting the permanent MD job.

For my part, I stayed committed to our partnership for a couple of reasons. I liked Paul a lot; his openness and humility in those early days was a real breath of fresh air to me. I also had great confidence in Ivan's ability to help me navigate this difficult environment. In addition, I had made a big investment in Getronics over two years and I was not keen on walking away without a successful case study.

3.7.3. The 'race' for the top job

> There were two other Directors around the table who were also ambitious for the newly vacated MD role. I personally wanted the top job on a permanent basis but was conscious that I had only been at the company for a few weeks. I was also mindful that the other two guys were at least as well qualified as me.

The situation described above by Paul not only highlights his challenges but also hints at mine. In our typical engagements, the MD is our client and all key decisions are channelled through him or her. In this case, I had three potential MDs with diverse needs and personalities, which I needed to juggle within a very sensitive context. I was also apprehensive about the potentially destructive impact of a competition for the top job.

My own belief at the time was that the other two candidates may have been better placed than Paul to lead Getronics. Ivan had thrown his hat in the ring as had the exuberant Irish Sales Director, Barry. My opinion was that Ivan was the best candidate because he was a very commercial and strategic HR professional. He was also the only candidate with any longevity at Getronics and was well respected throughout the organisation. Barry was the only candidate with MD experience which was gained in

Australia and overseas, albeit in smaller companies. I believed that his experience also put him ahead of Paul.

Despite my opinions I was obviously not going to be consulted on this decision by a remote Dutch parent. I was however, involved in conversations with each of the three candidates during the selection process and what I witnessed was somewhat of a remarkable 'negotiation' process between peers all vying for the top job. In my experience, this type of scenario can bring out ruthless and competitive instincts. In this case, I witnessed three leaders conduct themselves in an unusually positive way.

Even though the three candidates had been working together for only a few weeks, they had bonded in response to the crisis in Getronics Australia. I had seen them unite against what they perceived to be an interfering and unhelpful parent in Amsterdam. Midway through the selection process, the parent company announced to the three candidates that they would be also conducting an external search process in the belief that an external executive would be better placed to sort out the mess in Australia. These forces resulted in the candidates striking an unusual bargain; they decided that if any of them were successful in getting the MD role, he would have the full support of the other two. Ivan recalls one conversation between the three of them vividly.

> Barry said 'I would be happy to work for either of you'. Paul and I chimed in with our complete agreement to this commitment. With his usual Irish mischief, Barry replied 'good, it will be nice to be working with and for adults for a change'.

True to their word, Paul recalls how this bargain played out in practice – right down to the actual job interviews.

> It was quite a strange process. All three of us were after the same job, but we did not compete with each other. We actually supported each other. At the end of a few weeks, we sat in the foyer of the Manly Pacific Hotel, where the Global Head of our region was conducting the interviews. We wished each other well as we went in for our turn, and we debriefed each other on the way out.

After considerable procrastination, the parent company decided Paul's financial credentials were more important in the current context than the demonstrated leadership and people skills of Barry and Ivan respectively. Intuitively, I questioned their narrow definition of what it takes to lead a business in a turnaround situation. Fortunately, I observed Ivan and Barry park their egos and keep their promise to fall in behind Paul. Over the coming weeks and months, I came to understand just how important this support was as Paul struggled to settle into the leadership role.

3.7.4. Power and control don't work

> I was trying to do it all myself. It was all about 'do it my way' and 'do it today' or get out of the organisation. I was displaying what I would call a dictatorial style of management.

In those first few weeks of Paul's tenure as the new MD, I did not witness him drunk with power, though I did witness some of the dictatorial behaviour that he describes above. Throughout history, most dictators have been small men; Napoleon, Stalin and Mussolini to name a few. Despite their size, they were able to instil fear and terror in the populations they led. Paul had the added advantage of being a

rugby front-rower who stood six foot eight tall, about four feet at the shoulders, and had the most booming voice I'd ever heard. In my observation, Paul relied heavily on these attributes to get things done in the early days.

Rather than engage with his team and the organisation on how to solve the problems at hand, Paul closed ranks and tried to solve them himself. In response to the short-term performance demands coming from Amsterdam, Paul became demanding and short in his interactions with others. Ivan and Barry confided in me that Paul regularly berated his finance team but said almost nothing in customer meetings. At the time, I suspected that Paul's insecurities were getting the better of him.

Ivan and I discussed Paul's behaviour in those first few weeks and agreed to accelerate our planned Leadership/Impact measure for the executive team in an attempt to deal with it openly. Paul said yes to the accelerated schedule on the basis that most of his first two layers of management had been through the process and that he was lagging behind.

3.7.5. Nowhere to hide

> My first reaction [to my leadership data] was to say things to myself like 'these people don't really understand what I am trying to achieve as a leader', 'they don't understand what is required to fix this business', and most importantly I felt 'they didn't really understand me'. After a few minutes, I was getting quite comfortable that I had some good excuses and felt I had justified the feedback to myself.

On occasion, I have experienced leaders who rationalise their Leadership/Impact data by arguing that they are operating in a very challenging environment, and Paul certainly had that. I am usually able to contest this belief simply by pointing to the leader's own *ideal* profile which is usually dominated by a sea of blue ink and almost no red or green. In Paul's case, this was a little more challenging. While his *ideal* profile certainly had the high levels of blue that I would expect, he also had larger than usual extensions of red and green ink. As evidenced by his quote above, Paul was rationalising better than most even though his *actual* impact was quite balanced (see Figure 27).

The Getronics executive team were debriefed on their Leadership/Impact data by my colleague Leanne Myers. Leanne had worked with me on the Getronics account since we contracted with David some two years earlier. Leanne points to two reasons below, which help explain why Paul reacted defensively to his data, even though on the surface it was a fairly balanced first measure.

> Paul joined the leadership journey quite late and several members of his executive team had already made some big shifts since their first measure in 2003. I think he was particularly reacting to the very blue profiles of Ivan and Barry who were his competition for the MD role only a few weeks before. The other reason was that in the breakout data, his direct reports in the finance function whom he was still leading gave him a much redder and greener profile than the members of his new executive team.

As per Leanne's quote, at this point in time, Paul was still leading the finance function as Chief Financial Officer, on top of his new job as the Managing Director.

Paul's Ideal Impact
March 2005
L/I Ideal Impact (n=1)

Paul's Actual Impact
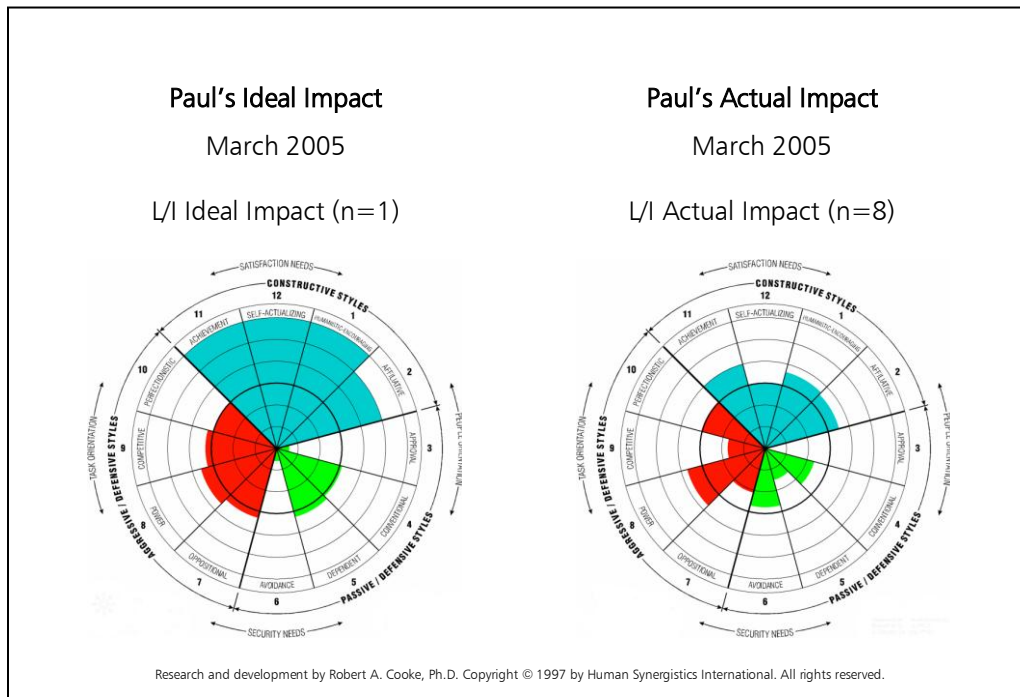March 2005
L/I Actual Impact (n=8)

Figure 27: Paul's Ideal Impact data (2005) Vs Paul's Actual Impact data (2005)

The Leadership/Impact tool allows us to 'breakout' data from different stakeholder groups when there are three or more responses from any such group. Figure 28 below represents the breakout data for Paul's direct reports in the finance function, and shows the very Defensive impact he was having on this stakeholder group in particular.
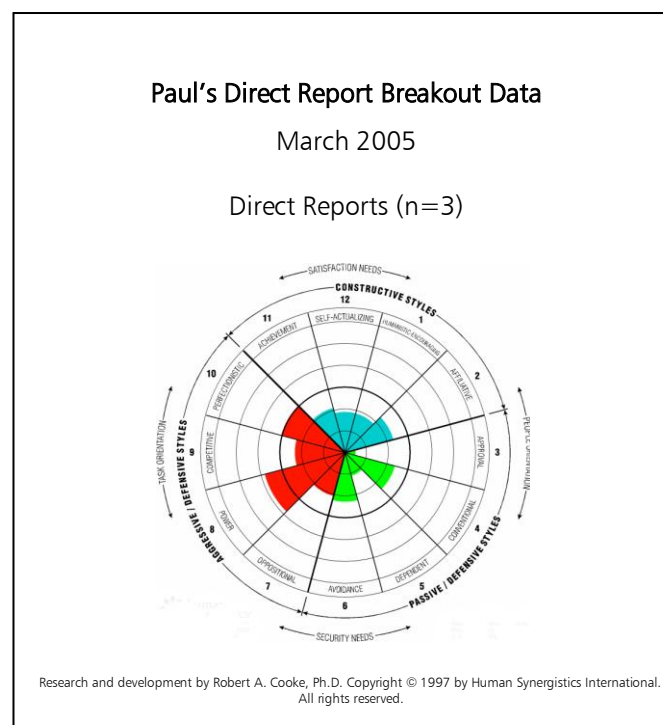

Paul's Direct Report Breakout Data
March 2005
Direct Reports (n=3)

Figure 28: Paul's Direct Report Breakout data (2005)

Paul recalls below how the public revelation of his data brought out his competitive streak.

> It did not help that when my colleagues got up to present their own feedback most of them had more blue than me. I was not used to coming second.

In the debrief session facilitated by Leanne, the executive team members took it in turns to show their feedback to the group and ask for feedback. This process helped to counter the 'good excuses' that Paul had been developing in his mind in preparation for the reveal of his data.

> My sense of comfort didn't last long as I was now on my feet discussing my Circumplex and getting feedback from my executive team on why they thought I was motivating people toward Power, Perfectionism and Avoidance. They gave me example after example. I had no place to hide.

Leanne and I discussed the more autocratic elements of Paul's leadership approach with Ivan, particularly why he felt that some degree of Aggressive impact was desirable. Our shared insight was that he was trying really hard to impress the global CEO of Getronics Klaas, and was modelling some poor behaviour as a result. Klaas had a reputation that preceded him, as reflected by Paul.

> Klaas, at six feet five inches tall, thought he was the tallest person in the organisation until he met me. He had a reputation as a ruthless, turnaround man. He once carried a baseball bat onto a stage as an opening theme for the Getronics Global Leadership Summit. He used the bat to describe his preferred leadership style.

Following Paul's challenging feedback I focused our one-on-one interactions on trying to deconstruct the autocratic notions he held about leadership. This was a complicated exercise since on one hand, he had employed me to help him develop an effective model of leadership, but on the other hand he found it difficult to let go of the beliefs that he felt had got him his first MD role. Our conversations were quite theoretical and I don't think the penny dropped until he met Klaas in person for the first time at a quarterly business review in Singapore. Paul found out what it felt like to be on the end of some very aggressive behaviour himself.

> Klaas asked a question about one number, on one slide, in one part of the business, and my answer didn't make sense. So he jumped to his feet and said 'This is not acceptable. You obviously don't understand your business. I am going to go down to Orchard Road to buy some nice business shirts and when I get back you better have all the right answers.'

Paul came to see this interaction as a valuable lesson in the dangers of aggressive leadership.

> Klaas did not realise he taught me a valuable lesson - he let me experience power and control first hand. And I will say I didn't like how it felt. Not one bit. I now understood even more the impact I was having on others and how important it was to change.

At the time, Leanne, Ivan and I understood this to be a critical event in helping Paul embrace a Constructive approach to leadership. This experience also provided us with clues to Paul's preference for pragmatic and experiential learning over theoretical approaches.

3.7.6. From scepticism to evangelism

> I am not a complicated man. If I believe in something, I give it 150%.

In the months following the Klaas incident, I observed Paul become evangelical about the Constructive approach to leadership. His previous internal conflict seemed to disappear. Aside from the learning Paul took from his negative experience with Klaas, there were some very positive influences that helped to shift his thinking. Early in our engagement, I invited Paul to join our CEO think tank group where he was exposed to other leaders who were very advanced in their journeys and who also claimed they were experiencing performance benefits from Constructive leadership. Paul confided in me that one particular CEO had a profound impact on him, Mike Shove of CSC. Mike became a role model for Paul because he was also a financially numerate, no nonsense type of executive in the same industry as Paul. Mike was a leading example of personal and organisational transformation and Paul aspired to be, and do the same.

Through his interactions with the other CEOs, Paul understood that the first step in making change was to become very open about the gap between his *ideal* and *actual* Leadership/Impact. Ivan's recollections show how Paul brought his new found evangelism to life inside the wider organisation.

> He talked about his profile in front of all the regional managers and all of his leadership team. He said 'this is important to me, this is my profile. I'm trying to reduce this Competitive and Power behaviour. When you see it please pull me up'. So he set the standard about trust and openness very high.

While waving your 360 degree profile in the air may not sound like a sophisticated change strategy, in Paul's journey I observed several benefits. Paul effectively drew a line in the sand between his old ways and how he wanted to impact others moving forward. He created an imperative inside Getronics for people to hold him accountable to his aspirations to be a Constructive leader. Ivan recalls how powerfully Paul's conviction was received by front-line employees in the organisation, citing one particularly memorable staff engagement session below.

> Paul spent five minutes on the financials and 25 minutes on values and behaviour. He pulled out his own Circumplex and said 'this is me, and this is what I need to change.' He spoke about himself in a very powerful way, and people said 'wow, how good is that'? Then he talked about the values, what they meant and what he expected of them. Again he blew them away.

Paul also began to understand how asking others to hold him accountable would grant him the same license to hold his leaders to the same high standards. Though Paul had well and truly bought into the idea of Constructive leadership by this stage, he still did not have a precise picture about how to affect this accountability in a Constructive manner. He recalls an executive team meeting below where he took Jack, one of his regional managers to task on his lack of commitment to the leadership agenda.

> Jack had done no work on his leadership action plan; because he was 'too busy' and 'naturally blue anyway'. In my mind this was not acceptable and I couldn't help myself. I said 'well Jack, frankly I don't accept that for a minute. I'm busy but I find time, and next time you present you need to fill in that space and you better have a credible story'. And Jack said 'I get the message'.

Immediately following the meeting described above, Paul engaged in a reflective conversation with Ivan about his impact on Jack and the other leaders present. Ivan has confirmed with me the accuracy of Paul's recollections of this conversation, which I lay out below.

Paul	I'd be interested in your feedback about how I handled that.
Ivan	I'll be interested in your own evaluation.
Paul	I fucked it up didn't I?
Ivan	I know why you said it, it was pretty harsh, but frankly it got a very important standard established and a very important message across. So yes you were unusually harsh, and Jack probably crapped in his underpants, but he'll change, and everybody in that room got that message. So yes you need to think about, if somebody disappoints you then how do you express yourself constructively, but by and large I'm glad you expressed yourself.

Paul may have been a little unsophisticated in his counselling of Jack but my feeling at the time was that Paul had a largely Constructive impact on the leaders present. I debriefed this incident with Paul shortly after it occurred and reinforced to him that part of Constructive leadership is holding others to account. As Paul began to understand the harder elements of Constructive leadership, he was better able to reconcile this approach with his self-image as a 'hard but fair' leader.

In hindsight, this incident is also interesting for the window it provides into Paul's mental processing of his impact. In the early days, it never occurred to Paul to seek feedback after an incident like this. With his new found self-awareness and conviction to improve his impact, Paul actively sought this feedback from Ivan, Leanne or me on numerous occasions. In fact, Paul made a habit of seeking feedback after all executive team interactions. After a short while, Paul systematised the feedback loop by concluding every leadership meeting with a direct conversation about impact and standards of behaviour; both his and those of his team.

3.7.7. Uncomplicated man, uncomplicated approach

> Leadership change does not have to be complicated. I'm an action man. It's just my nature.

Coaching Paul required recognition of his preferred learning style; action. He was not a big reader, and despite my encouraging him to read widely, I don't think he ever did. I gave Paul a book every year for Christmas, and I may as well have given it to the local library. I stopped giving him books when Ivan told me that he took them from Paul's office, blew the dust off them and read them himself. As a result, our coaching sessions concentrated on the things he could quickly put into practice.

In this respect, Paul was different to the other CEOs I had worked with up to that point. Most required a degree of theoretical understanding and debate before shifting to action. Paul had no such need. Barry's reflections below capture the very basic questions that were driving Paul's leadership journey.

> He's not somebody who is very well read in terms of management books. I don't think he's been on a lot of management courses in previous companies, so this has been one of the first times he's had the opportunity to really take a formal process and really try to understand 'what is leadership', 'what is my

impact', 'what is the data actually telling me', and then 'what are some of the strategies that I could use in order to change that?'

Being a student of leadership myself, I had always believed that having a solid understanding of leadership literature was a necessary asset. My experience with Paul challenged that belief. Paradoxically, Paul's limited tolerance for leadership theory enabled him to take targeted action more quickly than I had been used to with other CEOs because he was wide open to influence.

> Peter and his team kept on saying 'trust the process'. Since I did not know what the process was, this was what I called blind faith more than trust.

While Paul had placed 'blind faith' in my knowledge of leadership theory, I thought his trust was well founded. He had scrutinised our case studies and spoken with many successful CEOs in our network. He also had respected Ivan's support for our engagement, and told me that he had been won over by the very direct approach Leanne and I had taken with him from the start.

As a result of this trust, Paul followed our process meticulously. There were two things that I recall vividly about my one-on-ones with Paul. Firstly, he took many pages of very detailed notes. Secondly, he concluded our meetings by walking to his executive assistant's desk and asking her to integrate all of his actions and commitments into his diary and task list right then in front of me. Selfishly, I took a real joy from these meetings with Paul. His uncomplicated and methodical execution gave me confidence that he would make the changes he had committed to. Paul recalls below how he integrated his learnings into his everyday environment.

> Mine was a very detailed and planned approach to using the toolkit and the strategies at every opportunity. That was the way I operated.

After many years of knowing Paul, I understand that he was using such a systematic and scripted approach early in his journey because very few of the concepts were familiar to him. Paul's journey became less scripted and more natural when he began to connect the concepts he was learning to his own deeply held values.

> Well I think the strategies and the behaviours I have learnt through the process have just reinforced to me that I am pretty well on the right page with my values. Therefore all the tools, the guidance, the mentoring and the counselling were reinforcing my values. This was allowing me to take my leadership to the next level.

Paul often spoke to me about his deeply held values of 'honesty, integrity and teamwork'. I aimed to accelerate Paul's comprehension of Constructive leadership by linking his values to the language of the Circumplex. For example, Paul and I spoke about how the Affiliative style in simple terms meant cultivating good relationships. When I was able to link this style to Paul's passion for rugby and his value of 'teamwork', he was able to internalise this concept. He had a similar reaction when I spoke about how the Achievement style meant setting important goals and executing upon them. We were then able to link this style to Paul's value of 'integrity', which in his language meant 'delivering on your promises'.

Paul's values were about to be displayed on a very public stage. In early 2006, in response to their slow financial recovery and pressure from Amsterdam, Paul and his executive team decided that they needed to institute a salary freeze for the whole company in the coming year.

3.7.8. Paul 'delivers' on his values

> The only big ticket item left to cut costs was a salary freeze for 12 months. At a time when it was already very hard to find new staff, it was going to be a brave or a stupid decision to potentially alienate existing staff. The team agreed we had to do it. The only question was how. To me it was obvious. I didn't want to do this via email, I wanted to front them. I had to lead from the front.

Despite our collective energy for the leadership and broader organisational change agenda, Getronics Australia was still losing money in the first year of Paul's tenure. The deeper that Paul and his executive team dug in that first year, the more holes they found. In a global multinational that had a very narrow definition of success, Paul and his team were under relentless pressure.

In my experience, high-pressure moments like the salary freeze situation facing Paul present an opportunity to demonstrate Constructive leadership in a powerful way. Paul recognised the power of this moment and took ownership of the decision. As per his quote above, he resolved to communicate it personally in face-to-face forums rather than delegate the problem to HR or the Communications department. It became clear that he never even considered any other option. In recent discussions with Paul, I now understand that his decisiveness on this issue had its origins in lessons he had learned from his father.

> Basically my father taught me that you always need to front up. When you got bad news, you can never, ever hide from that. You need to stand up and do the right thing, front up and look people in the eye and tell them why that is, what it means to you, and what you are trying to achieve.

When Paul spoke to me about his dad, he proudly told me that he was awarded an Order of Australia for services to the community. Paul admired his father's strong desire for contribution and doing the right thing and wanted to make sure he lived his life the same way.

The salary freeze event brought Paul's deeply held values to the fore and these values enabled him to trust his intuition about how to handle this situation. Ivan and I provided a sounding board to Paul but it was clear that Paul was now in the driver's seat. None of us predicted the response that would follow.

> I received a tremendous amount of positive feedback from a cross-section of employees who had never been at any company where the CEO was prepared to face the music on such a tough call. And people said 'we're with you', 'we understand why you've had to do it', and 'we're also going to stick with the company – we won't be leaving'. We actually had a very low turnover because of the salary freeze.

Ivan and I have discussed Paul's leadership during this event many times and feel he had a positive impact for several reasons. Paul implemented the decision in an egalitarian fashion; everyone in the company including Paul was subject to the salary freeze. His face-to-face delivery meant he could look staff in the eye and they could eyeball him back. His delivery of the message wasn't stage managed; he gave people all of the facts that led him to the decision and then allowed people to question him directly. He allowed

people to see the bigger picture and what he was trying to achieve in the medium-long term. Finally, this event put Paul's deeply held values of 'honesty' and 'integrity' on a big stage for all to see; and judging by their reaction, they liked what they saw.

I observed Paul integrate his values in many practical ways into the organisation. He was always very perturbed by leaders who paid 'lip service' to values and made a point of letting me know. Leanne's recollection of Paul's office is a case in point.

> He had the word 'DELIVER' [one of Getronics' values] printed out on a giant poster and put on the wall behind him just above his head. He's 6 foot 8 tall and there's this word staring you in the face every time you look up. I felt very clear on what was important to him.

Paul had an affinity for the concept of 'walk the talk' and I heard him use this regularly with the leaders in Getronics. Barry captures how seriously Paul took this statement.

> He's six foot eight and he flies economy on Virgin! So all the things he's done, he's treated all employees in an egalitarian fashion, with integrity and respect. As a result, they see the journey that he's going through as a leader as something that's genuine, and they see the journey that he is taking the company on as something that is also genuine. There isn't one rule for us and one rule for them. I don't know if he realises how much people admire that. It's just the way he is.

It was my observation that Paul had well and truly stopped 'acting' in the MD role and was integrating his own values-based approach to Constructive leadership. I also observed that he had emerged from the shadow of Ivan and Barry and was now clearly the leader of Getronics Australia. But while Paul was making steady progress with his impact on the local organisation, he was not yet having the same positive impact on the global organisation.

3.7.9. Getting fit to grow

> There was a crisis that Paul and Simon [Paul's regional boss in Singapore] faced. Simon was belting us up and we were telling him to 'be more helpful'. This was a euphemism for 'fuck off; we are doing the best we can!' I don't know that we would have come out of that well if you didn't broker that peace, and that agenda for change.

What Ivan is describing in the quote above is among the most difficult and high stakes situations that I have ever had to navigate as a consultant. Paul was under increasing pressure to deliver more than the salary freeze decision. While the financial results were improving, they were not improving fast enough for the parent company in Amsterdam or Paul's regional boss in Singapore; Simon. I also found out from Ivan that Simon felt that he was hearing too many stories about our change process and not enough evidence of financial turnaround.

Simon announced that he was coming to Sydney to develop a plan with Paul to make up the short fall in profit expectations. Ivan, who had a long term relationship with Simon, saw the writing on the wall for both Paul's leadership and our change process. He felt that the only way for everyone to survive this situation was for him to try and put me in the middle of it. With my permission and Paul's endorsement, Ivan suggested to Simon that I broker the conversation between him and Paul. Simon agreed on the basis that I had Paul's trust, that I had a strong knowledge of the Australian business, and that I was an

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experienced facilitator. This scenario would also give Simon a chance to assess me directly and determine the value of our change process that he had heard so much about.

I asked Paul and Ivan why they wanted me in the middle of this situation, particularly since I thought Ivan was well qualified to facilitate a solution between Paul and Simon. I was also concerned that my presence might undermine Paul's leadership if it appeared that he needed a babysitter. Paul recalls why he wanted me in the middle.

> Ivan and I were very concerned about our ability to be objective and constructive in the circumstances. We had been working day and night doing everything possible to turn the situation around. Simon and Klaas were adding no value and were becoming a serious distraction from the challenge at hand. I was worried that one of us would fly off the handle.

This led Paul and I to discuss how he was managing up in the organisation. I reflected to Paul that I felt he was not managing his superiors in the same Constructive way that he was leading the Australian organisation. He told me that he was struggling because he could not align with what he perceived were the values of his superiors. According to Paul, the only thing they valued was financial results, at any cost.

I challenged Paul on three fronts. I shared my learning that Constructive leadership in a local subsidiary of a global multinational included creating space for the subsidiary to be successful. I suggested to Paul that as the MD of that subsidiary, this was a role that only he could play. I shared my belief that all leaders have noble intentions and that if he looked hard enough, he could even find them within his superiors. And finally, I told Paul that I believed he now had the skill and insight to effectively lead his superiors. Following my conversation with Paul, he committed to prioritise the management of his superiors beginning with the meeting with Simon which took place in my office in Sydney.

Contrary to Paul's assessment of Simon, I found him to be quite reasonable and very committed to the success of Getronics Australia. Paul took my feedback on board and behaved very constructively. Between the three of us, we thrashed out a simple statement of outcomes and goals that became known as the 'Getting Fit to Grow' agenda. It was no longer than a page, but provided guidance for action and specific roles for Australia and the regional office in Singapore. Both Simon and Paul acknowledged that they needed each other in order to be successful. Pauls recalls the shift in the dynamic of their relationship below.

> Following that meeting, things with Simon changed quickly. He even began running interference with Amsterdam so as to give me and the team the space to deliver on our promises. Surprisingly, he also asked if the leadership and culture change strategy would be relevant for Asia overall!

For my part, I had the dual satisfaction of helping to broker the peace and protecting our change process, which Simon now understood was critical to the success of Getronics Australia. In the months following the Simon incident, I watched Paul's confidence as a leader grow to the next level. He had been endorsed by his regional boss who was now a fan. The financial results accelerated upward, and Paul was more convinced than ever about the power of Constructive leadership.

3.7.10. You either change the people, or you change the people

> If you think you're going to get your numbers and be rewarded in the future, that's not going to be the case; you need to change your behaviour too. Because frankly, if you don't change your behaviour, I don't want you to be working here.

The quote above is taken from one of Paul's all-staff road show presentations and Leanne and I saw him deliver this message with conviction many times. The challenge for Paul, however, was to follow through on this very strong message. Leanne's reflections below highlight Paul's biggest challenge in this regard.

> There was one member of the executive team who was really not supportive of our change agenda and really gave it lip service, and honestly in practice did the opposite. I think Paul was really challenged by what to do with this individual.

Paul, Ivan, Leanne and I discussed the challenges this executive was presenting for several months. My sense is that Paul knew early on that he needed to remove this individual from the organisation but hesitated for several reasons. This person possessed enormous knowledge about the business and was deeply involved in some key accounts. He also had a strong global network of support in Getronics and was highly regarded for his technical expertise. I also believe there was a strong emotional component in Paul's hesitation. By this stage in his journey, Paul had cemented a deep belief in the power of people to change and desperately hoped this individual would get on board with his agenda. Eventually he ran out of hope and patience, as he recalls below.

> After all other avenues had been exhausted, I decided to let him go. It was a tough decision but it was necessary for us to move forward. I was surprised by the sense of relief in the organisation once the decision had been made.

I have now seen this type of situation many times. The principles of Constructive leadership can sometimes be a bridge too far for executives, especially those nearing the end of their career who do not want to change what they perceive has got them to where they are. As a result of my experiences, I use the aphorism with CEOs that 'you either change the people, or you change the people'. Since they do not always act on the advice, it reminds me that aphorisms do not always work. Often, I have observed leader's procrastinate on taking this decision and then later regret that they did not make it sooner. Almost always, they are surprised by the positive energy they release in their organisations as a result of removing a values misaligned leader. As per Paul's quote above, this was certainly the case for him.

As 2006 drew to a close, Getronics Australia returned to a healthy profit for the first time in three years. Paul and his executive team had committed to remeasure their Leadership/Impact in the new year and Paul approached this moment with a sense of positive anticipation.

3.7.11. A standing ovation

> I looked at my results and I felt a sense of pride, and relief. I shouldn't have been surprised but I was relieved all the same.

In February 2007, Paul and his executive team received their Leadership/Impact remeasure data in a team debrief run by Leanne. I was pleased that Paul's *ideal* impact was now extremely Constructive. More

importantly for all concerned, his *actual* impact had shifted quite dramatically from his first measure in 2005 (see Figure 29).
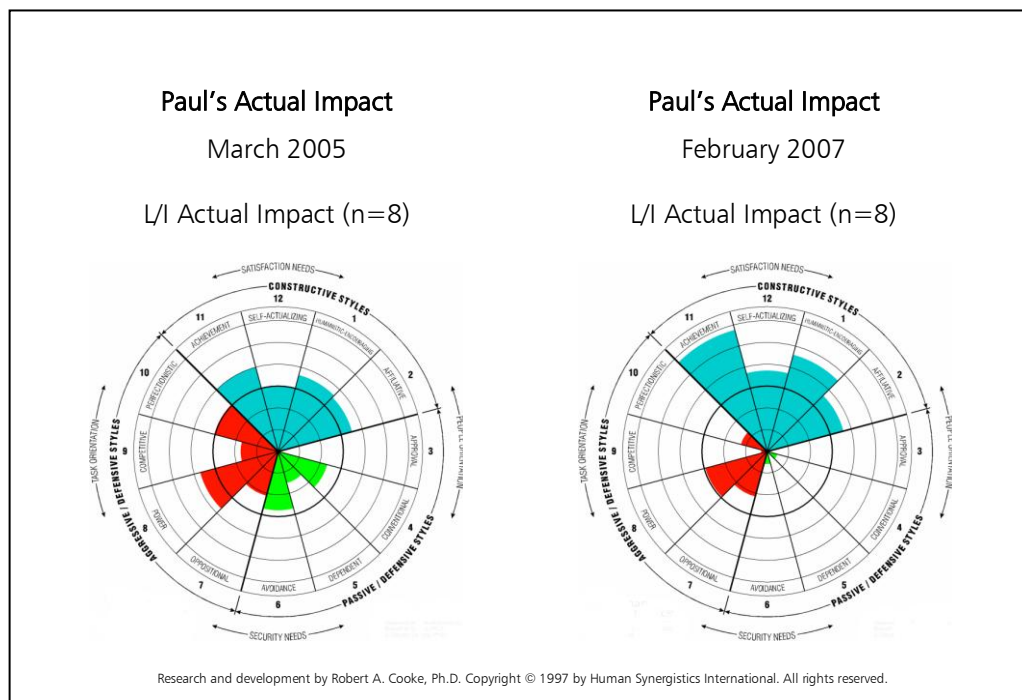
Figure 29: Paul's Actual Impact data (2005) Vs Paul's Actual Impact data (2007)

Shortly after Paul received his Leadership/Impact data he boarded a plane for the annual Getronics Global Leadership Summit in Cannes; a gathering of the company's top 150 executives from around the world. This event marked a change in his relationship with Klaas, as he recalls below.

> Klaas, now my best friend because of the turnaround in the financial results, came up to me in one of the breaks looking very nice in one of his new business shirts. He asked me to tell the turnaround story to the whole leadership group, straight after the morning tea break. I was in trouble. I did not have time to prepare. I did not have my Leadership/Impact folder with me. I was very nervous.

Based on my experience with Paul over the previous three years, I am pretty sure that this request from Klaas would have been his worst nightmare. Even though Paul had become more intuitive with Constructive leadership by this stage in his journey, he still spent an enormous amount of time preparing for even the smallest event. I had always felt that Paul overplayed this strength a little and was not at all surprised to hear what unfolded, even if Paul was.

> Nevertheless, it came fairly easy to me. I told them about the whole leadership and cultural change process. I talked about my old and my new Leadership/Impact. I talked about how each member of the executive team had contributed to the turnaround of the business, emphasising that it wouldn't have happened without their strong support. I told them how we won a Cisco Global Award as Cisco Technology Excellence Partner of the Year. I outlined the lengthy list of new business deals we had won. And I spoke very proudly about the tremendous turn around in the financial results. Finally, I thanked Klaas for walking out of my Presentation in Singapore. I referred to this as a turning point, which he mistook for a genuine compliment. I am very humbled to say that I got a standing ovation from the Global Leadership Group.

From what I have been told, this story is now legendary in Getronics globally. At six feet eight, standing alongside Klaas on the dais Paul had described without planning, a compelling story of personal and business transformation in full view of the assembled Summit. Klaas did not produce the baseball bat that year. Klaas probably made a good call.

3.7.12. Staying the course

> It has been very much like a sailing journey where at times we have been going with gusto and at times we have just been sitting in still water. One of the things that has come out I guess, is that when we were sitting in still water, or most importantly when we were in a storm, was when we should have been using Constructive leadership to its greatest extent. And that's when I would think we were off the radar and we would need to get it back on the radar. We need to start thinking about what we are doing as a leadership team, how we are using the tools and then we would start off again. We would get along pretty well and then it would drop off the radar again. So I need to constantly keep this on the radar which is what we have been trying to do from the beginning of this year with the theme we have got running through the company of 'building the blue'. Because it just sort of keeps rolling and fluxing and wanning I guess you could say, like a sailing boat.

I find Paul's metaphor for his journey typical of him for several reasons. He speaks very much to the concept of a team navigating stormy seas together. The stormier the seas became, particularly in his up-line environment, the more Paul relied upon his leadership learnings to get Getronics Australia 'back on the radar'. He also speaks to the discipline that has characterised his personal approach to increasing his Constructive leadership. Finally, Paul's metaphor contains the humility of a CEO who still feels that he is 'fluxing and waning', despite having turned around the organisation's performance and his Leadership/Impact simultaneously.

In lieu of Paul's physical stature, and the fact that we have discussed his passion for rugby many times over the years, I would choose a rugby metaphor to describe his journey. I see him moving from the front row to the halves. At first he was very much physically and psychologically leading from the front, pushing, shoving and working very hard to make ground. Then he moved to the halves, where he's been a little more creative in looking for gaps and chances to break through. He is less reliant on his physical presence and more reliant on thinking about the moves that he had rehearsed in practice, and about how he applies them on game day.

3.7.13. <u>Epilogue</u>

In mid 2007, Leanne and I transitioned the running of the leadership and change process at Getronics Australia to Ivan and his HR team and the process continues 'in-house' today. Even though our formal partnership ended at that time, Paul and I have maintained regular contact ever since, and catch-up for breakfast every couple of months.

In 2008, Paul's close friends in Amsterdam decided to sell the Australian subsidiary of Getronics to UXC, a publicly listed Australian IT services company, so that they could shift their focus to key markets in Europe. In my conversations with Paul, I was not surprised to learn that he managed the transition from CEO of a multinational subsidiary to CEO of a publicly listed enterprise very constructively. He enjoys a good relationship with his boss and the numbers have not missed a beat.

Paul and his wife Amanda have recently become the proud parents of two beautiful children. Not only is Paul coping with the extra responsibilities, but he is flourishing. He tells me he has also become an avid reader, finally, even if it is Dr Seuss.

In September 2009, Paul's journey came full circle. Having admired the story of Mike Shove and CSC from years earlier, Paul shared the stage with Mike at the 11th Australian Conference on Leadership and Culture in Perth, where they presented their stories of transformation side by side. Paul's presentation at this conference was filmed and is included in this doctoral submission as *Appendix F – DVD of CEO Presentations*.

In October 2009, Paul and I replicated this presentation at Melbourne's CEO Forum. And in 2010, we did it again for Sydney's CEO Circle group. All three audiences were taken aback by the big numbers guy, who spoke about Constructive leadership with the substance of a Harvard Professor, and the style of a country boy from outback NSW. Below are Paul's closing comments from these speaking engagements. I think they sum up his journey very nicely.

> I think sometimes leaders think you have to put on a Superman suit to be a CEO, and pretend you are made of steel. People sooner or later will see through that mask. Leadership change does not have to be that complicated. Give me an Elvis suit any day.

3.7.14. Paul's reaction to reading his narrative

My initial reaction is 'wow, this journey does sound impressive and so true'.

The story very accurately describes the transformation of my leadership, both the ups and downs, the tough and easy parts. But it is only on reading the story a few times and thus reflection that enables me to remember the hard work which went into this transformation which is now entrenched in my behaviour and how I try to lead the organisation. It is only then that I feel really proud of the achievements.

I'm very comfortable and certainly no rewriting is required. So you can relax, I couldn't be happier. Thanks a million for writing it, it is a great read.

3.8. NARRATIVE – DENNIS FOX

3.8.1. Prologue

A story type that describes my journey? Wow. Well to some extent it was a drama, and to some extent it was a comedy. I think there is a component of seriousness; you are trying to achieve something that is aspirational, something that's far reaching, and you really do want to try and achieve it. But equally, it has also got to have humorousness, satire and all those other components because it is a human journey, so you want people to enjoy it.

I think the drama occurred for me more at the start - each time I suddenly took a major learning curve that challenged me to question myself. Each time I took a step forward I'd think to myself 'well why was I so stupid not to do that before?' Or I'd think to myself 'I've got to change my behaviours - and that's not easy!' So those events are slightly dramatic.

I think the comedy components come about as you watch other people interact. Being slightly detached is very useful in terms of seeing how people react. I think various components are like actors on a stage - life is a bit like a play of some sort.

And so that's how I see it.

3.8.2. A montage of contradictions

> There is no fucking way I will let you near my people with that Circumplex thing. Stay focused on the strategy agenda.

I met Dennis Fox, along with the entire Asteron executive team, in May 2005. Dennis was the CEO of Asteron, the two-year old financial services arm of the Promina Group; a large Australian insurance conglomerate. Dennis was known as somewhat of a legend in the insurance industry having had a long and awarded actuarial career with National Mutual, Towers Perin, Royal and Sun Alliance and Tyndal. By all accounts, he had been the natural choice to launch Asteron to the marketplace in 2003. As you might appreciate from the quote above, this meeting is pretty well etched in my memory for all time. Historically, I would normally never meet with a prospective CEO client for the first time in front of his full executive team, but this was a now or never situation. My colleague Ron Schwartz had been contacted only two weeks earlier by an old business acquaintance, Patrick, who had recently been appointed to the position of Human Resources (HR) Director for Asteron. He told us that the executive team had spent several weeks crafting a new strategy and were interested in engaging some consultants to help them align their 1200 people to it. Patrick told us that they had committed to make a decision at the next executive team meeting in two weeks and that he could get us one hour on the agenda.

Ron and I arrived at the meeting somewhat dishevelled from our four block walk to the Asteron offices in Kent Street, Sydney. We later discerned that Kent Street forms a wind tunnel in winter. When we arrived in the Asteron boardroom, though the temperature was markedly warmer, we found our reception to be almost as cold and resistant like the headwind we had just endured. I remember vividly, the strained half smiles on the faces of the ten executives sitting around the table. In fact, I recall that the only warm face in the room belonged to Dennis. As he stood up to welcome us, I made him out to be about six feet two inches tall, and quite fit looking for a man in his mid fifties. He was well dressed in a dark suit, silk striped tie and designer glasses. I thought he looked like what Magnum PI might have looked like if he were an actuary rather than a private investigator. But the thing that struck me most about Dennis was his great big smile bursting out from behind his big, thick moustache.

Ron and I were warned in advance by Patrick that Dennis could be intimidating; both in stature and intellect. But this baffled us for the first thirty minutes. He appeared to be respectfully contemplative as he listened to us outline the process by which we would engage his employees in Asteron's new strategy. In fact, he was about the only member of the team who didn't overtly challenge, oppose or talk over us at least once. It was no surprise to us when we later found out that seven out of the ten executive team members were actuaries or accountants by trade. We felt like we'd been analysed from every conceivable angle.

It was only when we moved to the second part of our presentation on the type of leadership which could support the engagement of Asteron's people in strategy that we finally understood Patrick's warning about Dennis. Our second slide, which featured the Human Synergistics Circumplex, was not up for five seconds before Dennis reacted with the very colourful quote expressed at the top of the page. I do not

scare easily, but at this point I felt a chill up my spine and I noticed Ron had gone a pale shade. To me, Dennis now resembled what Magnum PI might have looked like if he was an enraged vigilante.

Following Dennis' rather direct reaction, Ron and I did not need telepathy to simultaneously conclude that this was probably not the best moment to explore Dennis' sentiments on the Circumplex. The irony for us was that the Circumplex slide was only one of thirty, and we really put it in for reference purposes only. Judging by Dennis' reaction, we had hit a real sore point. To our surprise, the team seemed to take Dennis reaction in their stride, and even Dennis appeared to relax again as we took his advice and shifted back to the core agenda. The meeting ended politely and we were told that Patrick would be in touch shortly with the team's feedback.

As a chilling tail wind pushed us back up Kent Street, Ron and I tried to make sense of what had just happened. Firstly, we ruminated on the very aggressive behaviour of the executive team. We likened it to the intellectual equivalent of eye gauging in a rugby scrum. But mostly, we spoke about Dennis. On the one hand, he appeared to be warm and gregarious. On the other hand, he was downright intimidating. He also seemed very comfortable with what we thought was very unruly behaviour from his team. We recalled moments in the meeting where he spoke with the thoughtful sophistication of a Rhodes Scholar, and other moments where he did a convincing impersonation of a bar room brawler. All in all, we felt that Dennis was a montage of contradictions. This was all likely to be academic, however, since we put our chances of acquiring the Asteron business at no more than 25%.

That same afternoon, the unlikely happened. As Ron and I were still licking our wounds, Patrick called to tell us that the team had really liked what we had presented and wanted a proposal as soon as possible. He also told us that Dennis would like to meet with me in the next week to align expectations. We drafted a seven month proposal focused on two things only; creating a powerful context for the Asteron strategy by defining the organisation's purpose and big goals, and then developing a compelling story to bring the strategy to life throughout the organisation. Dennis liked the proposal and I found myself in his office one week after our first memorable encounter.

3.8.3. Getting to know each other, in retrospect

> After two years in the role as CEO I had made some tentative steps to bring the strategy to life – I think they were about 51% right and 49% wrong. That led me into searching for some way to increase the odds. And that led me to you.

Dennis greeted me at our first meeting with a level of warmth that suggested he held no grudges regarding the Circumplex incident. I felt much more relaxed in the one-on-one environment to explore his unique challenges directly with him, without a bombardment of interruptions from his team. Dennis told me that he was looking forward to our engagement and to bringing the strategy to life in Asteron. As he explains in the quote above, it was quite a calculated decision that he had taken to engage third party help. For my part, it appeared that something about our approach had particularly hooked Dennis but, at that point, because of the speed with which we had engaged, I did not know what it was. It was very unusual at this stage of my company's evolution for us to engage with a new client without having

meticulously understood the underlying motivation of the CEO in advance. It was my belief that a very public declaration of the CEO's motivation and commitment was critical for a successful partnership between us and the client. That said, expediency got the better of us in the case of Asteron. They were a great brand, in a sector we were targeting. They could afford our fees, and their office was just around the corner from ours. Ron had just completed a major engagement and I was actively looking for an attractive client to fill his additional capacity. As a result of our expediency, I had to work quickly to establish a solid foundation with Dennis.

I asked him, aside from the obvious need around the strategy, why he had decided to engage in this agenda. Dennis told me that in the Promina Group environment, he had an enormous amount of autonomy in his role, but this came with an expectation of very high accountability in return.

> The Board was saying to me 'we want you to grow the revenue stream. The market is growing at 15% per annum compound and we need you to grow it faster than the market'. And I thought 'ok, how am I going to do that?' We had no captive outlets. The market place had changed completely from what it was in the 1990s when we pioneered our old methods of doing it. We had to develop new ways.

Dennis' quote above speaks to the magnitude of the challenges he was facing. Coupled with the very large performance expectations of his Board, were huge legislative changes to superannuation in Australia and New Zealand. Dennis felt that these changes could be exploited to achieve the growth expectations for Asteron, but only if he acted right away. As a result, Dennis had contracted an external strategy firm, who were also actuaries, to get a robust view of the marketplace opportunities. The more we spoke, the more I felt an undercurrent of anxiety in Dennis' language.

> I think we launched the Asteron journey in 2003 with fanfare and no substance. So after the fanfare it dawned on me that if we don't add substance to it shortly I am going to look really, really, really stupid and the business will collapse. So it was really important we put substance beneath that.

I think Dennis was coming to the realisation that despite their technical sophistication, he and his team were actually quite primitive in understanding what it would take to actually execute their strategy.

> I think our technical detail of what the market was doing was really good but the strategy piece had to be more than that; we had 1200 people we needed to get on board. Eventually we all recognised that.

Dennis' humility really encouraged me, but at the time, I observed that he was predominantly talking in a detached way, giving me a very rational run-down of his team's challenges but not very much on his personal challenges. In my mind I had a question whether the 'substance gap' was solely a technical challenge or whether there was a leadership challenge embedded in Dennis' motivation to engage with us. Based on my previous experience with Dennis, I decided not to delve too deeply at this point. But I was really itching to ask him about his reaction to the Circumplex in our meeting the week earlier.

Toward the end of our meeting, I worked up the courage to ask Dennis, very respectfully, why he disliked the Circumplex so much. He very passionately recounted his experience with this technology only 18 months earlier when he and his colleagues on the newly formed Promina Group executive team underwent a 360 degree assessment using the Life Styles Inventory. The Life Styles Inventory is more

focused on personal behaviour and thinking style than the Leadership/Impact tool which is focused on how to motivate and encourage others to behave. That is, it speaks to the consequences of leadership. In my experience, Life Styles Inventory can be a far more personal and confronting experience.

> My boss hired a consultant to help us become a more cohesive team at the Promina Group level. In short, that consultant will never be invited into any business that I am involved in. She believed that she and her team were all Level Five leaders. And we were apparently not very good leaders at all! She didn't even run a business and we ran big businesses, so we were completely unimpressed with that view of the world. I found her style deceitful. I found the way she presented the information harmful to the individual as well as to the group, and of absolutely no use because we had nowhere to go with it. She would encourage you to be open and the more open we were; the more likely we were to get dumped on. I thought the entire process was bullshit.

I thanked Dennis for sharing his experience with me because it now put our first interaction into perspective; he did not want his own team to go through the same scarring experience that he had gone through with his peers. Dennis' aggression in that first meeting no longer felt like a contradiction to his otherwise warm demeanour.

I checked with him what I had heard to ensure that we were on the same page. Firstly, he did not appreciate being condescended to by a consultant with a much smaller job than him. Secondly, he felt the process lacked integrity. And finally, he felt it lacked any sense of purpose or strategic context. Dennis agreed.

Having seemingly established a greater level of trust with Dennis, I took our conversation a step further. I explained to him the difference between the Life Styles Inventory tool he had used previously and the Leadership/Impact tool, which we favoured for senior executives, in a way that seemed to resonate with him. Based on his reaction, I asked him whether he would be open to another discussion about Leadership/Impact at Asteron in the future; assuming the process was run with integrity and there was a clear strategic context. Dennis said that he would, and we parked this conversation for five months as we committed to focus singularly on the strategy agenda.

Dennis and I reflected recently on why I had had a very different impact on him than the leadership consultant he had worked with previously. He told me that he connected with me so quickly because I was empathetic and respectful of the massive challenges faced by him and his team; rather than judgemental and patronising. He also told me that he appreciated our very diligent focus on the strategy agenda that he considered so critical.

3.8.4. Painful beginnings

> The strategy piece was mind bogglingly, tiresomely detailed. Unfortunately, there were far too many actuaries and accountants in the room.

As Dennis' quote above suggests, our seven month engagement with the Asteron executive team in the back half of 2005 was hard work. In fact, in my opinion, it was torture. Ron's quote below really captures the sentiment of our experience during this period.

> I dreaded that walk down Kent Street every time, and it wasn't just the freezing cold wind. I knew that no matter how much we prepared, no matter how much buy-in we had to the process, no matter how much credibility we had in the marketplace, they would try and pick a hole in our process. It was like a sport to them but it was bloody painful for us. Everything took ten times longer than it should have.

During these early stages of our first engagement, Ron and I were beginning to take the constant opposition we experienced from Dennis and his team a little personally. We found two of the team members particularly difficult, Brad, his Head of Distribution, and Pamela, his Chief Financial Officer. We got the distinct impression that they didn't trust the process or us for that matter.

While we had experienced push back from executives before, we had not experienced it so consistently and universally from a team. We assumed that anyone who was prepared to pay our fees would be keen to get the full benefit of our insight and processes. With Dennis' team, however, this did not appear to be the case. We would spend an hour explaining the logic for a particular process, only to have them oppose it ten minutes later. Toward the middle of this engagement, we began to understand that it was not personal at all. In fact, they did this to each other all the time. As Ron stated above, it was like a sport to them. Dennis did not help the dynamic either, as he himself recalls below.

> I would express my views forcefully and vigorously. I was used to people who had a different view doing the same thing back to me; it was never personal. I really wasn't as people focused as I should have been.

Ron reflects below on the impact of Dennis behaviour on his executive team during this period.

> He would stay quiet for a period during the usual team banter, then he'd become impatient and provide the answer or make a unilateral decision over the top of everyone. I would watch this team of very aggressive, senior executives watch Dennis for clues as to where he stood on a particular issue before they spoke. It was bizarre.

We also observed that Dennis' behaviour was quite erratic in forums outside of his executive team too. At the cajoling of his Communication's department, Dennis kept up a regular program of staff presentations called 'Interact'. We were curious to understand what went on in these sessions as they would shortly become a key vehicle in our engagement of Asteron's staff in the strategy, so we attended the midyear forum.

Before the session, we found out Dennis was heavily scripted in advance. Ron and I shook our heads in amazement. We couldn't believe that a person with Dennis' outgoing personality and obvious charisma was being scripted into such a stilted performance. Once we saw what happened without the script, however, the logic behind this strategy became a little clearer to us.

> I was reading the words that the Communications Department had carefully written for me, and I stopped because I couldn't believe the bullshit that I was reading. I felt completely stilted. So I just put it down and started winging it. The crowd seemed to enjoy it; even though we ran over time and I said the odd inappropriate thing.

I likened Dennis' delivery to a series of fireworks displays without any form of central coordination or cohesion. He moved at such pace that people visibly struggled to keep up with him. He interspersed

complex insight with humour, profanity and a wide range of inappropriate comments that seemed to both dazzle and confuse the audience in equal amounts. I now understood the Communications department's desire to try and control Dennis into a scripted delivery rather than let him run wild. As we left the forum, I had still not decided which the better option was; one felt completely inauthentic and the other made me feel quite nervous.

By the time we reached October, five months into our seventh month engagement, Ron and I were really questioning whether we could deliver the outcomes we had promised; we had only two more sessions with the whole executive team. The combination of Dennis' erratic behaviour, and the consistently dysfunctional interactions with his executive team, meant that we had not yet reached agreement on the purpose or big goals, and Dennis was meant to be presenting them at road shows scheduled early in the New Year. The constant opposition and competitive behaviour among the team really challenged our patience. In fact, we were wondering whether we wanted Asteron as a long term client at all.

3.8.5. Getting into the black

> We probably took way longer on the strategy agenda than we should have, but you stuck with us, you persisted. And that made the strategy piece meaningful.

Three things happened in our October session with the executive team that gave us a glimmer of hope. Firstly, we finally reached agreement on the Asteron purpose and goals and this seemed to really energise the team. Secondly, we convinced them to translate their organisational values, called the 'Principles to Live By' (PTLB), into a set of executive team standards that they all agreed to abide by. In the absence of Leadership/Impact data, the PTLB gave everyone, including us, a way to label and call out unhelpful behaviour. In some ways, this felt like the beginnings of a leadership journey for the Asteron executive team; albeit not one that was declared formally. Finally, we assembled all of Asteron's strategic content; the purpose, goals, strategy and PTLB into a Venn diagram called the 'Asteron DNA' on one simple page.

Ron and I found it ironic at the time that a team of people who naturally gravitated toward volumes of data were so taken by a simple, one page diagram. From my experiences with the other CEOs in this study, I have learned that presenting a coherent story, which pulls together all of an organisation's strategic content on one page, is generally more compelling to senior executives than the most perfectly constituted 100 page report. Ron and I also suspected it played to Dennis' team's penchant for models and formulas. Either way, we didn't care.

As Dennis saw some good outcomes begin to emanate from our process, I noticed a shift in the dynamic of our relationship. Firstly, he became very accessible and began requesting frequent meetings with me. Secondly, he became very open to my direct feedback, and actually sought this out from me. To this point, I felt like Dennis had been keeping some type of mental score with our relationship and if trust were a balance sheet, at some point I had moved into the black.

> I am a person that if you win my trust, I am very loyal to you. I am a great believer that you don't stand in front of people blocking their capacity to achieve; that goes for people who are consulting to me as

well as people that work for me. As soon as you had earned that trust, as far as I was concerned, you were indispensable to me.

When I questioned Dennis recently about how I was able to win his trust. He told me that it was a matter of integrity.

> Integrity is my most important value. I think it came from my Catholic upbringing, going to a Catholic school, Catholic family. And for me, integrity is doing what you say you will, no matter how difficult. I considered you to be a person of high integrity; you delivered everything you said you would. In fact, you went a step a further and spoke the truth to us when it would have been easier not to.

In the latter part of Dennis' reflection above, he refers to the point in our relationship where I decided to leverage my new found levels of trust and share with him the frustrations Ron and I were having very openly. I told him that the only way I could see us working together long term would be to address the behavioural issues pervading the executive team very directly. I also told him that he would need to make some very serious personal commitments to behaviour change and lead from the front. He agreed that this was the next horizon for him and the team, and we agreed to put our ongoing partnership on the line in our last contracted workshop in December 2005.

3.8.6. Speaking the 'truth'

> It was a massive moment for me. I gave the team countless examples and observations of dysfunctional behaviour. I highlighted the enormous amount of time and energy wasted in competitive and oppositional debate. For once they just sat there and listened. It hit them right between the eyes.

Ron's reflection above puts me right back in the room for this very big moment. I remember being very nervous in the lead-up to our final contracted workshop, but then very calm on the day. We spent the morning wrapping up all of the outstanding items and the team acknowledged we had now delivered on all of our engagement commitments. The remainder of the agenda was scheduled to be a team discussion about next steps. Ron and I hijacked this session and told the group that there was one critical issue that the team needed to address moving forward in order to effectively execute on their strategy; their individual and collective leadership behaviour. As the group fell silent, I respectfully told them that we felt an obligation to playback our observations of the dysfunction that had plagued our interactions over the past six months. I told them that if this feedback meant they no longer wanted to work with us, that we were prepared for that outcome. Ron then gave them what we promised, and it was a liberating moment for both of us. I followed up Ron's speech by telling the group that the Leadership/Impact process must be at the centre of any shared agenda moving forward, otherwise we did not see the value in continuing with our partnership.

The first person to speak was Dennis. Obviously, he had known in advance that we were going to hit the group pretty hard but his response was not scripted. He told us that he appreciated our observations and was personally committed to a systematic leadership journey moving forward. Brad, perhaps our toughest critic to date, was the next to speak. He said that he too accepted the need for change in his personal behaviour and that of the team. The remainder of the session became a very cathartic confessional, and the dynamic was very different, as reflected by Ron.

> For the first time, we observed the team quieten down, let each other speak, and actually build on each others' ideas.

Dennis and I have spoken about this moment many times and we have concluded that there were a couple of key reasons why it hit the mark. Firstly, we shifted the power dynamic quite significantly when we declared our preparedness to walk away. The team saw this as a selfless and courageous act; it encouraged them to trust our insights and feedback. Secondly, we took a very pragmatic approach to giving them the feedback. We suspected that the team were not fully conscious of the impact of their behaviour, so we ensured our feedback was based upon many specific and vivid examples of our time together. As a result, the group appeared to be noticeably less analytical and far more learning-oriented in the remainder of the session.

We finished the session by agreeing our go forward agenda for the next twelve months; we would continue to roll out the strategy through the organisation, and most importantly, we would undertake a leadership journey with the executive team beginning with a measure of Leadership/Impact in March.

Ron and I made the walk back up Kent Street with a bounce in our step for the first time since our engagement began with Asteron. We marvelled at the outcome and complimented each other on our courage to 'speak the truth' in a very challenging context; something that we now do with confidence across our client base. In fact, based on our learnings from the Asteron experience, I spent a great deal of time 'beefing-up' our contracting process so that we could identify potential barriers to change in a prospect, before they became a client. This included developing a very direct relationship with the CEO even before a contract was signed, mandating some form of behavioural accountability from the start; whether Leadership/Impact or otherwise, and documenting in our contracts, the commitments we expected from the CEO and executive team. In effect, we made it very difficult for both parties to say 'yes'.

I had grown very fond of Dennis in spite of our tumultuous beginnings. Up to this point, our agenda had been quite transactional and very focused on the organisation. I was looking forward to deepening my relationship with Dennis as we worked together on his personal leadership agenda in 2006.

3.8.7. Peeling the onion

> I came to understand that if I wanted something to change, then the most important person to change it was me. I'd just gone through a process only a few months before of changing several members of my executive team because I didn't think we were achieving the outcomes. Then, through our early engagement with you, I came to the realisation that changing all these people wouldn't solve this problem if I remained as I was.

Dennis' quote above demonstrates the commitment that he had toward his own leadership journey. Our new contract with Asteron called for fortnightly one-on-ones between Dennis and me to 'advance the Constructive impact of the CEO.' I believe this transparency had several consequences. Firstly, Dennis was now accountable to deliver on his public commitment to change in his leadership. Secondly, Dennis' implicit expectation was that his team would mimic his commitment. Finally, our success was now tied directly to Dennis' success so the stakes were high for everyone.

I found Dennis' commitment quite curious at the time because he was nearing the end of a highly decorated career. I wondered what would motivate him to embark on a potentially confronting leadership journey that could expose his gaps and weaknesses. In our increasingly open one-on-one meetings during this period, I came to learn more about Dennis' personal motivation for embarking on his leadership journey.

> My history had shown that I was very good at remediating businesses; I seemed to always have an intuitive understanding of how a business makes money. But I had not successfully grown a business for a period of time, and I knew this business needed to get into a growth phase. And the only way I could do that was to engage in a process that hopefully built on my strengths and minimised my weaknesses.

At the time, even though it was quite a big revelation, it felt like a very rational and logical articulation by Dennis of a gap in his resume. I accepted this rationale at the time because Dennis was about the most rational and logical executive I had ever met. In a more recent discussion with Dennis, he revealed further insight into the personal motivation that was at play back at that time.

> We had the freedom and the investment to grow at Asteron, and I was wondering if I was the right person for the job. I saw other leaders at Promina that were exceptional people managers and they performed very well. I wanted to go on a personal journey to prove to everybody that I could do it. And to prove to myself that I could do it.

At first, I found Dennis a paradox. On the one hand, I experienced him to be strong, decisive and very centred; he seemed to have very well formed values. On the other hand, as is revealed in the quotes above, he harboured some personal insecurity. It felt to me like we were peeling an onion, layer by layer. As Dennis revealed intimate details of his background to me, I found it answered many of the paradoxes that I had experienced with him to that point.

> Dad would go to the fruit markets at 4am every morning and I have great memories about working alongside him on the weekends and in school holidays as a kid. More money passed through our hands than you can imagine. In fact, this is where my actuarial career probably started. There were no computers in those days; I had to make change in pounds, shillings and pence on the spot.

Having had a similar upbringing myself in the fruit markets, I had an insight how Dennis' polish and sophistication could give way to profanity and inappropriate comments. It was also informative on Dennis' ability to be engaging and charming, as these were basic techniques for survival in the markets. Finally, it gave me the early origins of his sharp intellect and numeracy. For Dennis though, he was not able to put his intellect to work right away.

> When I finished high school, life had gotten a lot tougher. Unfortunately, Dad was a gambler and an alcoholic and we went broke. So there is no way I could go to university as we still had to pay off school fees. So my first three years of working I used to give 75% of my salary to mum so she could pay off the school fees and help put food on the table.

Dennis recently reflected to me the impact of these events on him.

> One lesson was to be personally successful so what happened to dad would never happen to me, and the second lesson was not to be so stupid as to act with such a lack of integrity that you open up those

sort of problems. I think I learned that hard work works, and I also learnt that if you don't control your own behaviours you can do some really stupid things.

This reflection is insightful for me because it hints at the origins of Dennis' strong need for integrity. It also points to his personal drive and self reliance. But the thing I find most instructive in the context of Dennis' leadership journey is the importance of 'controlling' his behaviour. On top of his insecurities about lacking the capability to grow an organisation, Dennis was worried that, like his dad, his success could very quickly turn to failure if he didn't control his behaviours. It seemed that Ron and I had unwittingly tapped into a deep seated fear in Dennis when we had given him and the team our confronting feedback on their behaviour. And now that he was conscious of his erratic behaviour, my sense is that he felt compelled to do something about it which, in turn, gave me significant leverage in our coaching sessions.

I remember reflecting that in a little over eight months, the Leadership/Impact process had gone from being a dangerous distraction for Dennis, to being the primary way that he could achieve his aspirations and overcome his fears. By the time we came to actually measure Dennis' Leadership/Impact, I felt that much of the hard work had already been done and that we had a solid foundation for improvement; no matter what the data said.

3.8.8. A confirmation of what we already knew

> From my point of view, I wasn't surprised by the data. I was disappointed in the sense I knew I had to do better, but I wasn't at all surprised.

The thing that I remember most in the lead up to the measurement of Leadership/Impact for Dennis and the executive team was our sense of inevitability about what the data would say. It was now ten months since our first difficult interaction with them and four months since we had held up a mirror to the very aggressive behaviour which dominated executive team interaction at Asteron. The team was also now using the PTLB tool we had developed for them in regular team meetings to dialogue about their behaviour. In short, even though it appeared that the team was making some marginal improvements, everyone seemed very conscious that there was still a great deal of room for improvement.

Receiving the Leadership/Impact folders in our office one week before the debrief workshop only confirmed what we suspected. Mercifully for Ron and me, the *ideal* impacts for all team members, including Dennis, were a sea of blue; at least they had a Constructive *ideal*. While there was a reasonable amount of blue in the *actual* impact of the team, their aggregated profile was dominated by a red impact; particularly Perfectionism, Oppositional and Power. In fact, the team's profile felt like an accurate representation of what we had experienced to that point, and what we had communicated in simple terms during our courageous approach to the December workshop a few months earlier. Figure 30 depicts both Circumplexes.
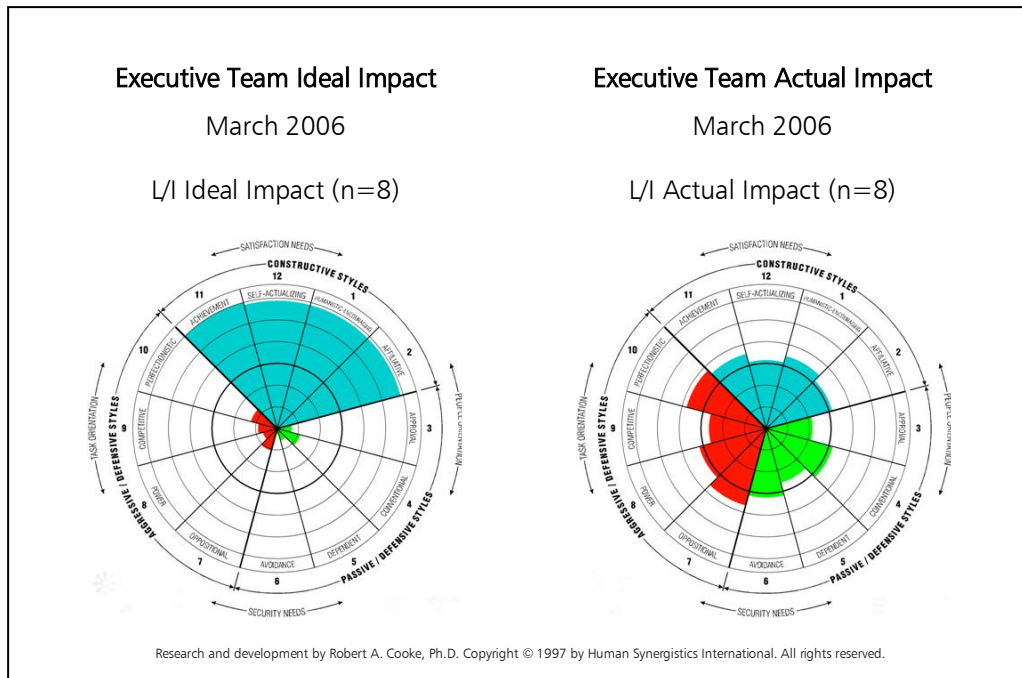
Figure 30: Exec Team Ideal Impact data (2006) Vs Exec Team Actual Impact data (2006)

Dennis' own profile was a slightly more exaggerated representation of the group's overall impact data (see Figure 31). Three of his top five impact styles were Aggressive Defensive; Oppositional, Perfectionistic and Power, and Oppositional represented his strongest impact overall reaching the 86th percentile. This was a representative picture of the behaviours we had seen play out in team interactions with Dennis. On the positive side, Dennis' scores across the two task-oriented Constructive styles were high, with his Self Actualising impact at the 79th percentile and Achievement slightly lower at the 71st percentile. His scores for the people-dimensions were noticeably lower, with Humanistic Encouraging and Affiliative at the 39th and 21st percentiles respectively.
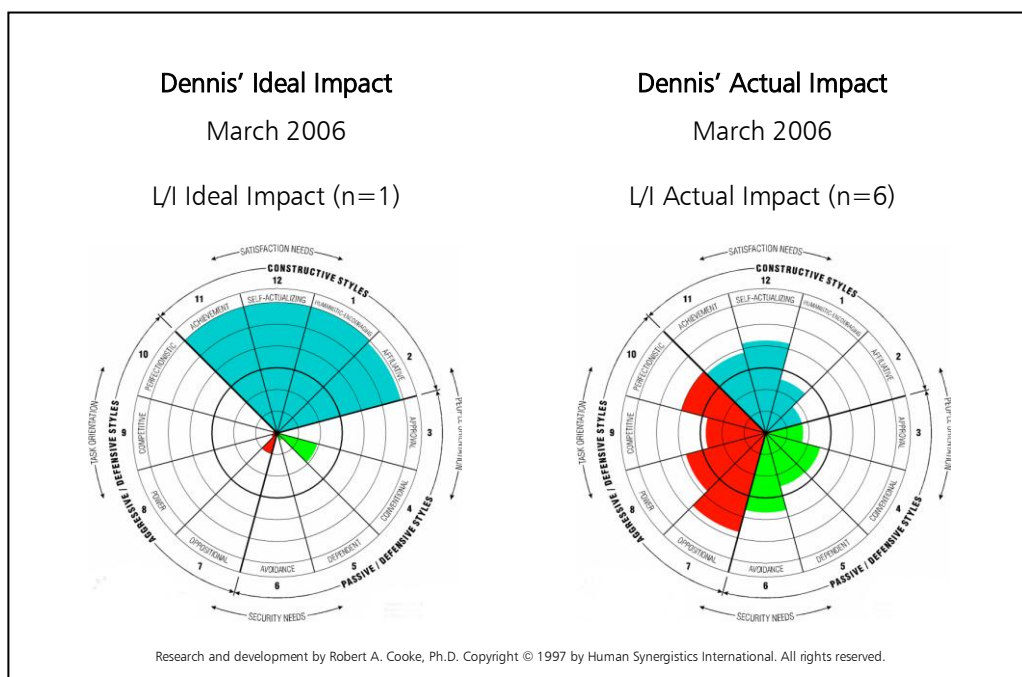
Figure 31: Dennis' Ideal Impact data (2006) Vs Dennis' Actual Impact data (2006)

Despite Dennis' previous experience with 360 degree feedback, I actually felt quite calm about the debrief workshop. Given his strong affinity for numbers, I expected that he would respond logically to valid and reliable data. Furthermore, impact is one step removed from behaviour so I expected that Dennis would not be as confronted by this 360 degree feedback experience as he was the last time.

> It didn't attack me as an individual; it actually went to what my impact was. So it was relatively easy in my mind to step back and say 'well they're not saying I'm a particularly good or bad person, their saying that the impact I'm having is not the impact I desire to have.'

Dennis' quote above is, representative of the unemotional logic that has always underpinned our approach to the Leadership/Impact process. In my opinion, Dennis' reaction is how the process should work, although this wasn't always our experience to date. Where the *actual* impact Circumplex conflicts with a leader's own self-perception, there is often a period of defensiveness and questioning of the data. Thankfully, Dennis was quite accepting of his data, which I put down to the groundwork we had been doing in our one-on-one meetings. The reaction of Dennis wife, Heather, also helped the process along.

> I took my feedback home to Heather and what was most disturbing was when she read it and said, 'that's you, that's you, and that's you' pointing to the red stuff and then says 'I don't know if that's you' pointing to the blue stuff.

While Dennis accepted the data very quickly, that acceptance did not translate directly to a sense of comfort. Dennis told me that he was somewhat daunted at the gap between his very blue *ideal* impact and his very mixed *actual* impact. In his mind, making the required change would mean entering a 'new world' that he did not yet understand; a world that was far cry from the concrete 'actuarial world' that he was used to.

3.8.9. Tapping into his intellectual horsepower

> The concept of the journey was important for Dennis. Once he started to realise that he didn't have to make the change straight away, he relaxed. I think his change started to accelerate actually.

Shane, Dennis' head of the Asteron business in New Zealand, explains how the concept of the journey helped Dennis to calm his initial anxiety about the large gap between his *ideal* and *actual* impact. Through our conversations, Dennis realised that he was already on a positive trajectory and that this first measure was just a point in time. The leadership framework gave Dennis the comfort and the structure to organise his thinking about where he was up to, and where he wanted to go next. Dennis and I spoke regularly at this time about the importance of trajectory over absolute outcome. Dennis had come from a world where the absolute result was what mattered. Shane's reflection above also speaks to Dennis' rapid acceleration. I believe that as Dennis relaxed into the process, he was able to look at the challenge in front of him in an empowering way.

Brad, Dennis' head of the distribution business, outlines below how Dennis framed the journey in his mind as an intellectual problem to solve.

> Dennis thrives on intellectual challenge and stimulation, so he made Leadership/Impact another intellectual challenge to try and master. I think that's why he really connected with you guys [me and Ron]; you demonstrated the intellectual rigour to support him on his journey.

I concur with Brad's observation above. When Dennis was able to draw on his vast reservoir of intellectual horsepower; it actually became fun for him in this context. Brad also comments on the fact that Dennis trusted me and Ron because of our intellectual rigour. I think Dennis saw us as the people who held the formula that he needed to 'crack the code'. Part of the reason Dennis felt this way was because he perceived rigour behind the Leadership/Impact tool. Whilst it had the underlying reliability and validity to satisfy Dennis' critical mind, it was also very accessible to him. Firstly, the visual and numeric gap-analysis incumbent in the tool seemed to appeal to his actuarial mind. Secondly, there were some practical strategies for closing the gap that made the challenge less daunting for Dennis. He told me that he did not feel 'hung out to dry' like he did after his Life Styles Inventory experience.

> The thing that is really good about the Leadership/Impact tool is it gave me a few strategies, which weren't particularly complicated, to overcome the identified gaps in my impact. It seemed intuitively obvious that I should at least attempt to apply those strategies in daily life. I mean I wasn't completely bloody stupid! It seemed to me that if the strategy is there, and that it does actually help you overcome what you don't want to be, then you should actually try it.

I love this reflection from Dennis; it's what I call 'Dennis logic'. It is at once instructive for understanding Dennis' journey, and typical of his wonderful sense of humour.

Previous to Dennis, I had a fairly structured action planning process that I applied to most CEOs, regardless of their context or preferences. One learning that I applied in interactions with Dennis was to only discuss Leadership/Impact strategies in the context of a particular challenge or event in his immediate future. Instead of meeting monthly in very structured conversations, Dennis and I maintained a routine of fortnightly breakfast meetings where we looked backwards two weeks to reflect on his impact, and then forwards two weeks to plan his future impact. The frequency of our interactions was really driven by Dennis who later told me that they coincided with an awakening on the power of his increasing self-awareness and reflection.

> As soon as you start understanding what increasing self-awareness is achieving, you see how you can actually change your outcomes just by reflecting. You become more conscious so you actually reflect more often, and you become far more aware about the impact you are having. It is like a spinning wheel, it spins faster and faster.

The frequency of our interaction was aided because Asteron had recently moved into a new office building only one block from my office, with a great cafe downstairs. The timing of Asteron's office move was fortuitous for the work we were doing with Dennis and Asteron; it was modern, fresh and intentionally loaded with imagery from the PTLB including colour coded floors. Not only was it a great place to visit, but I felt it really symbolised the changes Dennis was trying to make.

Dennis honoured every single scheduled one-on-one, regardless of how busy he was. I took this as a sign of his commitment to the process. I got a lot of joy out of my coaching sessions with Dennis and participating in the inevitable mental gymnastics our conversations would involve. I was used to working

with very smart people but Dennis could explore and grasp a concept at phenomenal speed. I felt like it was my role to relate these leadership concepts to Dennis' values, his ambitions, and the specific events of his everyday life.

> You gave me insights and useful tools. You could nearly say they were small seeds planted, the concept of the acorn. And I think that's what it was all about; it was planting small seeds that were useful.

Based on my experience with all of the CEO journeys before Dennis, there were some seeds that I encouraged him to nurture more quickly than others. Specifically, I encouraged him to engage people in his journey early on; inviting them to hold him accountable for his commitment to change. I suggested that he should use leadership 'symbols' to send powerful messages to the organisation about what he thought was important. I encouraged him to be clear and unapologetic about what he would hold others accountable to; particularly the Asteron PTLB and the principles of Constructive leadership. I felt this would help Dennis to loosen his grip on the organisation and empower his next levels of leadership. While it was me who planted the seeds, Dennis proved very astute at growing these seeds with an even larger group of leaders at Asteron in the following months

3.8.10. Loosening his grip

> When Dennis formed the Senior Leaders Forum, he really started to see people as more than just numbers and resources. He saw people as who they were, and really started to energise the concept of supporting them as individuals, letting them grow. I think that accelerated his change as a leader.

Shane reflects above on the impact of Dennis' decision to form a Senior Leaders Forum; a group which was constituted of 80 people made up of Dennis' executive team and their direct reports. We had recommended the formation of this group to Dennis and his executive team in an effort to distribute leadership more widely in Asteron. The Senior Leaders Forum was charged with the task of building a Constructive culture, and energising the organisation around the Asteron purpose and strategy that we had worked on some months earlier.

I remember the launch of the Senior Leaders Forum in July 2006 very well for several reasons. Firstly, it was the only time that Asteron's most senior leaders had come together in one room and the energy was palpable. With good humour and complete transparency, Dennis showed everyone his Leadership/Impact feedback and reiterated how powerful the process had been for him so far. He chose that moment to announce that he was so passionate about the process that he wanted every member of the Senior Leaders Forum to go through the same process; something that was received with a round of applause. We had agreed with Dennis and his executive team that we would roll down the Leadership/Impact process to this group so that we could equip them to handle an increase in leadership responsibility. Privately, Ron and I had spoken about wanting to accelerate the executive team's leadership journey. We had learned that rolling down the Leadership/Impact process to the next level was likely to create a powerful upward pressure on Dennis and his team; the shared commitment to Constructive leadership had the effect of superseding established hierarchy. In other words, leadership at Asteron would soon be defined by certain behavioural norms more than positional power.

Dennis wrapped up the first Senior Leaders Forum by asking everyone to move onto the balcony of the Darling Harbour venue. As we stood around wondering what we were doing in the cold night air, we were motioned to look back across the water toward Asteron's new building just as the big, blue Asteron sign at the peak was lit up for the first time.

I think this was such a powerful moment for all present because it created a sense of shared identity among Asteron's most senior leaders. Dennis had told them earlier in the day that they were the future of the organisation and as the light came on, I felt a sense of pride sweep through the group. I noted with some awe at how beautifully Dennis had stage managed this whole exercise. It was clear to me that he was not only internalising the messages I had been giving him in our one-on-one meetings, but was now taking these ideas to a whole new level. Dennis and I have spoken about the impact of this event on him many times over the years. He told me that it really reinforced his intention to loosen his grip on Asteron and empower his next levels of leaders.

> So it's realising that all these actions that we want to occur, occur through other people, not through me. My job is to enable other people to want to do things. Then watching those people successfully execute something is really satisfying.

I can recall the one-on-one meeting where Dennis had the insight above. It was the day after he had made a very well received strategy presentation to his boss and the Promina Group Board about the future of Asteron. Dennis had been prepared for the Board presentation by his bright young Strategy Director, a 35 year old named Aaron. As Dennis basked in the afterglow of his success with a strong cappuccino, we reflected on just how far Aaron had come and how easy he made this aspect of Dennis' life as a CEO. I chose this serene moment to remind Dennis of what he had told me about his interactions with Aaron only 12 months earlier.

> With Aaron, I would go straight to the answer. I would say 'no, that's bullshit. That survey over there tells us this, and that survey tells us that, and this is how we are going to do it. So what the fuck are you spending so long on this other stuff for? The answer is obvious.'

As Dennis reflected on his previous approach with Aaron, he did so with a wry smile and a shake of the head. It was quite clear to me that he was embarrassed at the thought, and had no intention of going back to that sort of behaviour. As I reflect now, it remains remarkable to me how quickly Dennis was able to overcome his more controlling and aggressive behaviour.

In my observation, there were a couple of practical strategies that helped Dennis down this path. The first was the use of Socratic questioning, as he observes below.

> Rather than give people the answer, now I ask them questions to help them explore the quality of their thinking. Being trained as a consultant, previously if you asked me a question, I gave you the answer very quickly; often before you even finished the question! Now, I encourage them to find the answer. And as you practise it you see the positive outcomes. It is actually quite amazing.

The second strategy Dennis employed was the use of silence, as Brad recalls below.

> I remember sitting in executive team meetings where I knew Dennis had the answer, but he wouldn't give it to us like he used to. He would sit there patiently as we figured it out asking us the occasional question to help us along. It was bloody frustrating at first, but obviously something we all need to get through to take the next step as leaders and as a team.

At the time, I felt like the use of these strategies was the critical factor in Dennis' shift from more of a technical expert to a leader. After more recent discussions with Dennis, we have arrived at a deeper understanding of what was behind Dennis' use of the strategies above; a shift in his underlying assumptions about the role of the leader.

> I think one of the most important things I learned was to let go. Where I let go, it happened, when I held on tight, it didn't.

On reflection, it occurs to me that Dennis' relinquishing of his controlling behaviour was at the heart of his approach to many of the strategies that he employed in an attempt to shift his impact. The idea of letting go may appear simple, but it was a challenging thing for each of the seven CEOs to do in my experience. Dennis and I would often talk about two competing metaphors to describe organisations; 'organisation as machine' where the leader has to have his hands on all of the levers, and 'organisation as a living system' where the leader fosters a more inclusive and fluid approach to leadership. In a recent discussion, Dennis revealed how the latter approach helped him to move beyond his controlling behaviours to a more insightful and intuitive approach to leadership.

3.8.11. Trusting his intuition

> I originally hired Brad to run the distribution business. He had an excellent pedigree in that business, a real technical expert, but he was known in the market as a bit of a difficult character. In the first year he was with me, he proved that the market perception was quite right. I decided to shift him into the funds management leadership role, a subject area he knew nothing about. Intuitively, I knew he would either have to grow his leadership capacity, or he would fail completely.

In our one-on-one conversations, Dennis spent an enormous amount of time discussing people issues with me. One member of Dennis' executive team who consumed a significant amount of our dialogue was Brad. Brad displayed a similar intellect to Dennis and had a very large, mixed impact on his colleagues and the broader organisation. His penchant for resisting corporate bureaucracy meant that Dennis would often have to smooth over the waves that Brad created.

I asked Dennis what his intuition told him about Brad. He said that he felt like he needed to up the stakes for Brad by taking him out of his area of expertise in the distribution business and putting him somewhere where he could only be successful if he tapped into the expertise of others. I encouraged him to trust his intuition and he resolved to address this issue before the start of the 2006-2007 financial year. Dennis took a decision to move Brad into funds management, which was a huge bet because he had no track record there at all. As a result, Dennis' decision came out of left field for most observers.

> I had enormous opposition to putting Brad in charge of funds management from very senior Directors of our organisation. But I followed my instinct and he became an incredible success winning Best Performing Fund in his first year. He knew nothing about the business, but he knew all about Leadership/Impact. He understood the importance of leading, and giving people the direction and

understanding what they want. He actually had to do all the things he knew he should do as a leader, rather than be the interfering technocrat he used to be.

Dennis and I have discussed many times over the years just how significant Brad's success was for his own leadership journey. At the most basic level, he had taken a very big, public gamble. To overcome the massive opposition he faced, Dennis effectively attached his own credibility to Brad's success. The very positive outcome now encouraged Dennis to trust his instinct on big people decisions, something he had not been confident to do until this point. I was impressed with Dennis' insight and courage at the time, but I am even more impressed on reflection. It strikes me that Dennis demonstrated an enormous amount of emotional intelligence to discern the nuances between technical expertise and leadership capability in the case of Brad. In my opinion, it was a very complex move, executed with real foresight and precision.

Perhaps even more importantly, Brad's success became reaffirming for Dennis' own journey. The similarities were palpable since both Brad and Dennis had been technical experts promoted into roles where their technical expertise was much less important than their ability to lead senior people toward shared outcomes.

In just on a year, it felt to me like Dennis had achieved more positive momentum in his leadership journey than many CEOs I had worked with before had achieved in three years. The anecdotal evidence from his team had been very positive; they regularly told Ron and me how much progress they felt Dennis had made to this point. Concurrently, Asteron's trajectory had also been very positive. Asteron finished the 2005-2006 fiscal year achieving substantial growth and the mood in the business, as evidenced by increasing employee engagement scores, was buoyant.

As I reflect on Dennis' journey to this point, it strikes me that he had a very stable and supportive context in which to pursue his leadership journey; the insurance market was growing, the Promina Group was performing well as a unit, and he enjoyed enormous trust and autonomy from his boss. In retrospect, I believe that this stable context was a key variable that enabled Dennis to grow his Constructive impact so quickly.

The stable context Dennis had enjoyed to that point began to change quite dramatically in late 2006. It was at this time that a rival financial institution, Suncorp Metway, began circling the Promina Group as an acquisition target.

3.8.12. Standing up to the test

> I think the Suncorp acquisition of Promina was the right thing for our shareholders but I couldn't help but feel disappointed for our organisation. Selfishly, I had a vision of handing over a successful Asteron business to one of my team members as I moved into retirement in a couple of years. I knew the Suncorp merger was likely to change that scenario.

The financial press became awash with takeover speculation as early as October 2006, but it was not until March 2007 where the offer became real and was accepted by Promina Group Shareholders. By coincidence, Ron and I were at the Asteron offices at 8am for a scheduled meeting with the executive team the morning the $7.5 billion deal was ratified. After a quick 30 minute meeting to discuss the

potential implications of the merger, Dennis and the team decided to call an urgent meeting with their Senior Leaders Forum.

> I was concerned about how my 1200 staff would process the news and I wanted to get out in front of them as soon as possible. I asked my top 80 leaders at Asteron to clear their diaries for the morning and join me and the executive team in the Asteron training rooms. By 9am, we had 60 leaders around the table and another 20 on the phone.

There are three things that I recall vividly about that morning. The first thing that I recall was that the executive team's first concern was for their staff; not for themselves, as referenced in Dennis' quote above. The second is how purposeful and self-directed Dennis and the executive team were under enormous pressure. Of course, as a member of the Promina Group executive team, Dennis knew what was happening in advance of the announcement. Nonetheless, Ron and I were largely spectators as the team decided how to respond to the news. But the thing that I recall most was the manner in which Dennis addressed his leaders and the impact that it had on all of us who were in the room.

> I wrote some notes myself. Then I made them shorter and shorter, into sort of point form. Then, I put them away. Not because I remembered everything, but because I knew the impact that I wanted to have. I wanted them to be calm, thoughtful, and focused on our people.

The manner in which Dennis delivered his message seemed to dissolve the anxiety which appeared to pervade the room only a short time earlier. In his opening remarks, he talked very openly about what he knew, what he did not know, and what he wanted from Asteron's most senior leaders. It struck me that Dennis would never have said previously what he did not know. It appeared to me that Dennis was getting far more comfortable with ambiguity and trusting that he and his leaders would be able to navigate whatever came their way. I confess that I was amazed as I watched these leaders construct and deconstruct the future in an environment of extreme uncertainty.

It was the most focused and purposeful I had ever seen Dennis. I remember reflecting on the chasm between Dennis' delivery of his message on this important day and the haphazard delivery I had witnessed in that very first Interact session some eighteen months earlier. In my opinion, the key reason Dennis had such a powerful impact on the room was because he focused deliberately on the impact he wanted to have, rather than perfecting his script.

In the spirit of distributed leadership, Dennis encouraged each of his executive team to address the room before opening up the session to questions. When all the questions were answered, we helped the Senior Leaders Forum distil their key messages down to those that would be taken out to Asteron's people. As we watched these senior leaders purposefully stride out of the room and back to their staff, less than two hours after they all arrived at work expecting a very different sort of day, Ron and I just looked at each other and smiled. It felt like a very long way from the aggressive dysfunction and erratic behaviour that we had encountered only two years earlier.

To the relief of those on the Promina Group side of the acquisition, Dennis was confirmed as the new Group Executive of Suncorp Wealth Management only two weeks later. Somewhat surprisingly,

considering Asteron was the acquired entity, everyone of Dennis' team retained their place in the new Suncorp Wealth Management executive team. In my opinion, Dennis' team members were able to retain their places because of the Constructive and substantive impact they had on Suncorp through the early days of the merger process.

Three months before the Suncorp acquisition was finalised, Denis and I had recontracted for another 12 months of leadership work, including a remeasure of Leadership/Impact for the executive team roughly scheduled for mid year. In lieu of the massive integration challenges now facing all of Dennis' executive team members, the team asked that we postpone the remeasure for a while. That is, everyone except Dennis. He had been extremely focused on shifting his Constructive impact and wanted a remeasure at this critical juncture to see whether he was achieving the shift we had been working on. In April 2007, he found out.

> I was quite surprised and very pleased. I felt chuffed with my result but even more chuffed because I felt that the journey had been more than worthwhile. I mean it wasn't a small shift. It was like having a proper result that is 25% more than you best hoped. You feel as if you work for it, but it is still a more than pleasant surprise. As you know I can relate a lot easier to double digits!

Dennis' reaction to his remeasure of Leadership/Impact was priceless but not surprising under the circumstances. Figure 32 depicts his re-measure of Leadership/Impact. His sum total for the four Constructive styles was now greater than the sum total for the eight Defensive styles. Three of his top four styles were blue and perhaps most gratifyingly for Dennis; his number one impact was Achievement at a score of 91. Dennis could now say with confidence that he had moved beyond the technical expert whom everyone relied on, to a leader who enabled others to achieve the goals of the organisation.
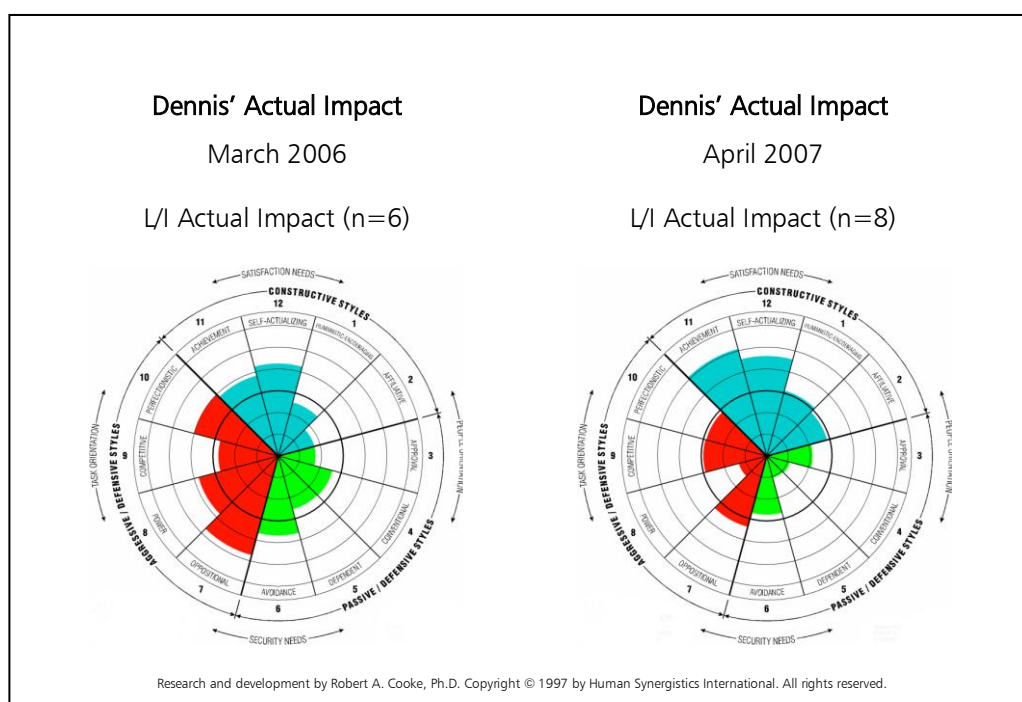

Figure 32: Dennis' Actual Impact data (2006) Vs Dennis' Actual Impact data (2007)

He had increased the people-oriented Constructive styles, Humanistic and Affiliative, by 14 and 26 points respectively. In other words, he was now motivating and encouraging his direct reports to develop their people and build quality relationships, not just focus on getting the task done.

But it was in the red styles where he had made enormous inroads. His Power score was down by 55 points, his Perfectionistic score was down by 28 points, and his Oppositional score was down by 26 points. It was little wonder that we now enjoyed our interactions with the Asteron executive team so much; Dennis was overwhelming motivating and encouraging Constructive behaviours in this group. Ron captures the outcome of Dennis' more Constructive impact for us below.

> In my observation, there was a huge decrease in wasted energy among the executive team. The energy that was previously spent scoring points by knocking each other down was now being spent trying to solve problems and achieve goals.

I was thrilled for Dennis and very excited to have a story of CEO transformation in such a short span of time; 13 months between first and second measures from an almost identical sample group. It was Dennis' journey that really opened my eyes to how quickly a leader can shift.

Dennis had become one of my favourite clients. In fact, I had visions that if I were to ever establish a separate coaching business, Dennis would be a great asset in that business. I wished he could be a long term client, but I knew he was nearing retirement. What I hadn't planned for was the rather abrupt end to his tenure as CEO.

3.8.13. Taking the moral high ground

> I think our journey got strongly taken over when we merged with Suncorp. It became a really tough journey in the subsequent 12 months. Personally I think it was the toughest journey I have ever had because I was working in an environment of low trust. For me, it was a massive values conflict.

As Dennis reflects above, the Suncorp merger was particularly challenging for him and his team. Suncorp had paid $7.5 billion for the Promina Group and understandably had a very aggressive program to achieve the targeted cost savings. One thing that Dennis' team found particularly challenging was the heavily centralised approach to services like finance and human resources. The Promina Group ran a highly devolved business model where the business unit CEOs had enormous autonomy. In the Suncorp model, the scrutiny and central control Dennis had to accept was far greater and something that did not sit so well with him; particularly at this late stage of his career.

Perhaps the most difficult aspect of the new environment for Dennis was the relationship he had with his new boss; the CEO of Suncorp. In the merger, Dennis' former boss at the Promina Group had exited the business to make way for the incoming CEO of Suncorp. Dennis and his previous boss were very close and enjoyed a great deal of trust and mutual respect built over 15 years of working together at Royal and Sun Alliance, Tyndall, and finally in the Promina Group. Dennis was one of only two members of the old

Promina Group executive team who survived the merger and told me regularly that he felt like an outsider.

In spite of the massive changes taking place as result of the integration, Dennis remained engaged with us right through 2007 and even into the first half of 2008.

> I wanted to make sure that my team was in the best possible shape to take a leadership role in the integration; not to be victims of it. I also needed that external perspective to help me navigate this very difficult environment constructively.

We maintained a very strong focus on Dennis' Leadership/Impact throughout this period but the topic of conversation had shifted markedly. Before Suncorp, all of our energy was spent discussing how Dennis could increase his Constructive impact on his team and organisation. During this period, the conversation was dominated by two things; how to manage upward, and how to maintain his motivation and energy for the job.

Following a challenging Board meeting in early May 2008, Dennis and his boss had a very direct conversation about Dennis tenure as the CEO; the contents of which remain confidential. The outcome of this conversation was Dennis' resignation. During the conversation, it became apparent to Dennis that this outcome was already in motion before the Board meeting. Dennis, being a person of high integrity, really struggled with this series of events, as he reflects below.

> In my mind, the only thing I have as a person is integrity, and ethics. That's who I am. I believe you must always treat people fairly, honestly and ethically.

What challenged Dennis' so much was not his exit; but that he was not trusted enough to behave like an adult and manage a smooth transition.

> They should have just come and told me. If I wasn't the right person for the job then I was really happy for them to come and tell me and we could have worked out a transition path that would have been really good for everybody. But they didn't do that.

In an effort to leave the best possible legacy for his team and organisation, Dennis completed the work we had commenced in early 2008, which included a review the new Suncorp Wealth Management business, setting some new aspirations, and determining a fresh baseline against which to measure progress. The big workshop where we were to play back the results of the review was scheduled for early May, only a couple of days after Dennis got his exit letter. In what I rated as a consummate leadership performance under the most difficult conceivable circumstances, Dennis encouraged his team to focus on the future and develop a rigorous plan that could favourably influence his successor who had been recruited externally to replace Dennis just two weeks later. He told his team that he was excited to be entering a new phase of his life and they should not fret for him.

Dennis' commitment to his values in bad times, as well as good, was not lost on his team as Brad captures below.

Dennis kept his values of integrity and ethics all the way through. I know that is something that has defined Dennis before, after, and during the transformation process, and I think that's probably one of those things that helped him change; remaining true to principles.

On the 9th May 2008, I received a group email from Dennis which summed up his mindset perfectly for me; it was optimistic, free of bitterness, and focused on an exciting future.

> Yesterday I sent the attached note to all employees in Suncorp Wealth Management and this was the best way to let everyone know of my plans. As a new 'poppy' to beautiful Ava Camela Fox (born 24th April 2008), celebrating with family my 60th birthday next month in Monte Carlo, and catching up with as many of you as possible, I do not have time for full-time work anymore. See you soon!!

3.8.14. Looking back

> It is interesting. I look back now and all those moments that looked big at the time always just turned out to be interesting and challenging. I know I said my journey was a drama but, oh look; the drama was probably all in my mind! I think the drama is always around personal challenge from my point of view.

Dennis gave me the reflection above recently when I challenged him around his description of his journey as a drama, as per the prologue of this narrative. Originally, I was surprised when he gave me this description because in all of the transcripts and all of my recollections, I struggled to find many big dramatic moments in between his two measures of Leadership/Impact; though there were a few before and after.

After some thought, I think that it was a different type of drama than the other CEOs in this study who chose this story type; these other CEOs were more emotive, taking deep dives into issues, and dealing with strong personal conflict. Dennis' drama was at a very intellectual level. I believe the drama for Dennis partly stemmed from his own very high personal standards. He would often say things to me like 'how could I be so stupid not to see this before?' Additionally, I think the leadership journey which we embarked upon together forced Dennis from the comfort of his position as a 'guru' of industry, into a novice in what he initially perceived as the fairly abstract world of leadership. Brad expands on this below.

> In Dennis' case I think it was quite remarkable that he went from, what I'd categorise as being a fundamental shift from the concrete to the abstract. I think about the journey from his context – he's gone from being highly numerate and highly analytical to being far more abstract and subjective. That is undoubtedly a significant and uncomfortable shift that you've got to undertake. In his case as I imagine it, you're going from the cold hard science of actuarial to people – geez! So you've got to be, in your own head, quite transformational in how extensive you think this change has to be, as opposed to it just being incremental, it has to be transformational.

If there was one thing that is unique for me in partnering with Dennis on his leadership journey, it was his necessity and capacity to grapple with his leadership journey intellectually before he applied it practically. Under those circumstances, I can understand why it may have felt like a drama to him while it looked like something far less complicated to the rest of us.

In addition to asking Dennis to describe his journey as a story type, I also asked him to describe his journey as a metaphor. I think the one he responded with below is an accurate and vivid summary of what I experienced with him.

> I can picture in my mind going from a beginner to an experienced snow skier. And it just seems to me that actually articulates the journey quite well. You start off snow ploughing and you have to put so much energy into achieving, relatively speaking, so little. And as you get better and better at skiing, you're putting far less energy into it, and you're achieving so much more. So you actually use all of the environment to your advantage; you're using the steepness of the mountain, you're using the amount of snow on the slopes, you're going down as quickly as you can in an exhilarating fashion, because you can use that terrain and you can use that environment to your advantage. I think when you're looking at doing this, you start out on the leadership journey, it's really hard because it's scary; you're not sure how people are going to react to it. And if you start using the environment to your advantage, you start to realise people really want to be led – they want to see that the business has a future. And if you can give them that, you've freed up all their energies, that'll make the rest of your life so much easier to cope with.

3.8.15. Epilogue

Unlike many CEOs who struggle to adjust after their corporate life ends, Dennis has taken to it like a duck to water. He and I remain very close and I regularly describe his new career as a professional holiday maker. In the two years since he left Suncorp, Dennis celebrated his 60th birthday with family in Monaco and spent time in Bordeaux and Loire valley. He has holidayed in Italy, Japan, Ireland, Spain, Thailand, and watched the first Ashes test in Cardiff. He is currently touring closer to home in Western NSW around Orange, Mildura and the Murray River.

Whenever we catch up, the agenda switches very quickly from his professional interests to what he really enjoys talking about; his three beautiful grandchildren; two year old Ava, ten month old Gordon, and two month old Ethan.

From a professional perspective, Dennis keeps his substantial brain busy as a Director on the Boards of Swiss Re Life and Health, Swiss Re P and C branch, and IAG NRMA.

Perhaps the most amazing post-script for Dennis is the legacy of the work we did together at Asteron and then Suncorp Wealth Management. Dennis' successor, Geoff Summerhayes, heard good things about our work from the members of Dennis' old executive team. He picked up the review document we developed with Dennis, just as Dennis was exiting the business. When I met Geoff after he had reviewed this document, he told me that he thought it was a high quality piece of work that reflected his own early experiences. I found this quite remarkable under the circumstances but thought it was a great testimony to Dennis' character considering the circumstances surrounding the development of this work.

After a few months, we engaged formally with Geoff and continue to partner with him and his executive team on a range of initiatives designed to improve business performance. Our recent work incorporated a Leadership/Impact measure for his executive team and, most pleasingly for me, the four remaining members of Dennis' original team collectively shifted their impact in a Constructive direction.

For my part, I find Dennis's story particularly compelling because it challenged my previously held assumptions about how quickly leadership transformation can be achieved. All of the CEOs that I am working with today are benefitting directly from the learnings that I acquired from Dennis' journey; the last of my seven CEO narratives. And for that, I am especially grateful.

3.8.16. Dennis' reaction to reading his narrative

Reading Peter's narrative of my journey was a great reminder of where I was and with help from many people especially Peter, Heather and my team of where I personally changed and how exhilarating the change was – Peter you truly captured the journey and its highs and lows.

I had to force myself to start reading the narrative, as I was not sure I wanted to revisit parts of the turbulent end to my career as an executive. Once I started to read I was genuinely intrigued even glued to the narrative and really enjoyed reading about the impact my improving leadership capability had on the people around the business and me. What a pity I had not embarked on this journey many years earlier.

Some parts of my history were difficult to revisit even today these parts hurt, however, I felt Peter handled them with great sensitivity and I do not feel exposed or belittled so thank you Peter. On the flip side seeing those parts where I changed and the change had a positive impact on people was very rewarding.

I strongly believe all CEO's need another person as a touchstone to help them on their personal journey and to enable them to truly target the highest levels of leadership.

4. CHAPTER 4: SEVEN METAPHORS FOR LEADERSHIP TRANSFORMATION

4.1. INTRODUCTION TO THE SEVEN METAPHORS

You have just read seven CEO narratives of leadership transformation; those for *Alan, Mike, Jim, Clynton, Tim, Paul* and *Dennis*. It is my intention that these seven stories stand as a significant contribution in their own right for my two audiences, the management practitioner and academic.

At this point of a traditional positivist doctoral thesis, the author would generally lay out his or her findings from the research in answer to the question *'what does it take for a traditional manager to transform into a contemporary leader?'* Since I have taken a social constructionist view of the world, I cannot lay claim to any such findings. This view means I am not licensed to formulate substantive conclusions, only to offer interpretations. What is on offer to the reader are my thoughts, learnings and insights garnered from the narratives, the four year formal research process, and my intimate relationships with the seven CEOs; some of which stretch back to 2001. In a way, this chapter may be looked upon as an eighth narrative, in effect my own meta-narrative interpretation of the seven CEO narratives that have come before.

In light of my chosen social constructionist approach, and the practical orientation of a DBA thesis, I have chosen what might be viewed as a novel and unconventional approach to represent my primarily qualitative data as suggestive generative metaphors, as opposed to a 'rigorous' evaluation of quantitative data as a test of extant organisational theories. There is a growing body of theorists who would suggest that this approach is established and worthwhile. Metaphor and its place in organisational theory owe a lot to the seminal works of Gareth Morgan (1986, 1997). Many theorists and practitioners alike draw from Morgan's early definition of metaphor as "a way of thinking and seeing" based on a comparison between two discreet domains and conceptualising them as somehow similar (1986:12). Morgan's use of metaphors, such as *organisations as brains*, and *organisations as psychic prisons* (1997), were primarily designed to assist practitioners in the application of a theory about their organisation.

Beyond Morgan, my approach fits within a broader tradition of works that ascribe metaphors with an important creative role in making sense of, shaping and constructing organisational 'reality'. For example, for Lackoff and Johnson (1980) metaphor is both a poetic and a conceptual device, which enhances our ability not only to conceptualise and understand the world, but also in structuring experience. Building upon these assumptions, Tsoukas (1993) asserts that metaphor is an economical mechanism for understanding complexity. Carl Weick was more interested in using metaphor to help leaders think about practice. In his 1979 classic *Sensemaking in Organizations.* Weick asserts that "people see more things than they can describe in words. A metaphor can often capture some of these distinctive, powerful and private realities that are tough to describe to someone else." (1979:49).

In the tradition of Weick and fellow social constructionists, it is my contention that metaphor has a credible role in academia, as reflected by Ortney (1992) in a review of seminal authors on metaphor.

The constructivist approach seems to entail an important role for metaphor in both language and thought, but it also tends to undermine the distinction between the metaphorical and literal. Because, for the constructivist, meaning has to be constructed rather than directly perceived, the meaning of non-literal uses of language does not constitute a special problem.

Several of the authors who have inspired this thesis employ metaphoric devices in their work. For example, Keith Grint likens leading to four different art forms in his book *The Arts of Leadership* (2000), including 'philosophical art', 'performing art', fine art' and 'martial art'. Carl Weick explores complexity in organisations in *Making Sense of the Organization* (2001) by drawing upon a range of metaphors including an 'unconventional soccer game'. In his book *The Leader on the Couch; A Clinical Approach to Changing People and Organisations* (2006), Manfred Kets de Vries uses the metaphor of the 'couch' to explore facets of executive coaching. Margaret Wheatley uses the metaphor of the 'road' to explore leadership and change in her book *Finding Our Way* (2005).

Beyond the influence of my social constructionist lens, there was in fact a convergence of additional forces encouraging me to present my research 'findings' via metaphor. One such force came to the fore as an emergent part of the research process itself. As seen in the seven CEO narratives, each CEO used a metaphor to characterise his respective leadership journey. When I asked the CEOs to further describe a metaphor or metaphors for their journey of transformation, I found their responses to be far richer, more colourful and insightful than their more literal responses to my interview questions. This in turn, helped the CEOs to access previously difficult parts of their journeys, and also to access their journeys with much more feeling and emotion. In fact, Clynton, Mike and Alan contributed very directly to three of the seven metaphors that I use in the subsequent sections of this chapter.

There was also a very practical force compelling me to use metaphors to describe my research. In early 2009, I was asked by the Managing Director of Human Synergistics Australia, Quentin Jones, to present the early 'findings' of my research at the 11th Australian Conference on Leadership and Culture to be run by his company in September. This was a significant opportunity for me considering that the audience for this conference is the 'management practitioner'; that is, several thousand senior executives and change agents across Australia who are interested in both the theoretical and practical applications of leadership and change practices. I accepted Quentin's offer on the basis that I didn't know anyone who had ever had the opportunity to test their formative doctoral 'findings' on several thousand people in the precise target audience. My dilemma then became how to communicate a set of 'findings' that I was still trying to make sense of, based on 29 interview transcripts and seven CEO narratives, in no more than one hour. In conversation with Skye about my dilemma, the solution soon became apparent.

If a picture is worth a thousand words, a metaphor is worth a thousand pictures. James Hauden

Skye reminded me of how I often used this quote with our consulting clients whenever they were faced with trying to communicate complex or large amounts of information to others. The quote had a profound impact on me when it was first told to me by the founder of Root Learning Inc, James Hauden, back in 2001, and I had taken it to heart. It stood to reason then, that using metaphor would allow me to distil my content into a form that would be accessible to my audience. The use of metaphors would also

allow me to explore and communicate ideas that were still formative in my own mind. At the Conference, I invited four of the CEOs to take the stage with me so that the audience could hear their voices directly. My contribution was then focused on making sense of their journeys for the audience through my seven metaphors. I have since repeated various versions of this presentation, sometimes with the CEOs and sometimes without, to a range of CEO groups including the CEO Forum, CEO Circle and CEO Institute, as well as the executive teams of numerous public and private sector organisations. A sample of the feedback from some of these events can be found in *Appendix E – Resonance with Management Practitioners*. Generally speaking, in addition to the acclaim bestowed upon the CEOs for their courage and humility, the metaphors resonated strongly with the various audience members; many of whom expressed a desire to explore the content further.

The seven metaphors that I have chosen to explore my data are *Fire, Snowball, Master Chef, Coach, Mask, Movie* and *Russian Dolls*. The metaphors emerged during the course of the research, either from the subjects themselves or from close familiarisation and interaction with the data. They were chosen to make sense of, tie together and inform concepts that emerged from the two rounds of interview data, our post interview discussions, and our insights generated from the narratives. In my discussion of the seven metaphors in this chapter, I make explicit at what point in the research process each metaphor emerged, and which elements of the Leximancer and interpretive analyses each metaphor was informed by.

Within my seven broad metaphors, I chose specific applications that I felt gave me the greatest licence to interpret the data. As I shifted my focus from the fairly literal concepts and themes that were emerging from the data, toward exploring the metaphors in a more open and creative manner, I found myself experiencing a similar sense of energy to that which I witnessed in the CEOs as they used metaphors to access a more holistic and emotive interpretation of their journeys. The metaphors not only helped me interpret my data, but opened up my mind to the seemingly infinite potential applications of the seven metaphors beyond my own interpretations. I got a flavour for the potential scope of the metaphors as I interacted with my 'management practitioner' audience during the aforementioned speaking engagements. To my great enjoyment, the question and answer periods would often entail audience members taking one of the metaphors in a direction that I had not at all conceived of. American philosopher and scholar Donald Schon (1963, 1979) speaks to this more 'generative' use of metaphors where they are used to generate new insights and perceptions, to explore new scenarios of future action, and to invite experimentation in areas of rigidity and convention. This outcome, the creation of generative metaphors, is a crucial contribution of my research work, embodying and supporting an open, creative and facilitative approach to knowledge sharing and development.

This chapter inevitably explores only a very narrow application of the metaphors based on my personal readings of the narratives, and the immediate task at hand. Despite my excitement for the generative potential of the seven metaphors I have chosen, this chapter reflects a practical need for this particular work to bring the hermeneutic spiral to interpretive closure – for now. I do however invite the reader to explore the potential of the seven metaphors in ways that are beyond, or in contrast to my own. Ironically, while a substantial amount of analysis has taken place to reach this current level of insight, I feel I am

merely at the beginning in terms of my exploration of the seven metaphors. It is certainly *my* intention to explore the potential of these metaphors for understanding leadership transformation beyond the scope of this doctoral thesis.

The seven metaphors appear in the following sequence; Fire, Snowball, Master Chef, Coach, Mask, Movie and Russian Dolls. In some ways this sequence makes sense and in other ways it is highly arbitrary. I have placed the 'fire' first because it speaks to what sparked each CEO's journey. I have placed the 'Russian dolls' last because I feel this metaphor helps to tie together the expansive nature of each CEO's journey. The metaphors are outlined in Figure 33 below. While they are inevitably presented, and represented, in a specific order for the purposes of this thesis, this should not be rigidly interpreted. My tension in sequencing the metaphors, and in fact segregating them at all, emanates from my experience that each of the metaphors interacts with the other six at various stages of each CEO's journey.
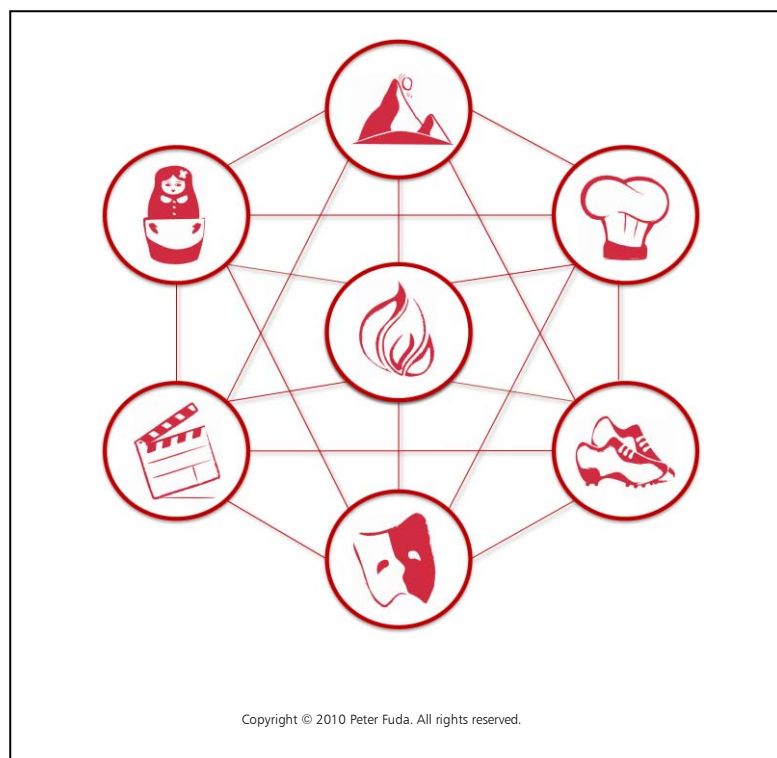
Figure 33: Visual Summary of the Seven Metaphors for Transformation

4.2. FIRE

My first metaphor is that of fire. Fire is often used as a humanistic metaphor where 'heat' represents 'emotional intensity' in various forms including anger, passion, love, urgency and desire. For the purposes of this study, it is the latter two I am particularly concerned with in terms of the CEOs' imperatives for change. The fire metaphor has typically been used in a business context to denote urgency. In this vein, Harvard Professor John Kotter (1996) popularised one aspect of this metaphor in discussing a 'burning platform' as the critical prerequisite for successful change efforts.

The origin of the burning platform derives from a story about a man working on an oil platform in the North Sea who is awoken one night by a large explosion. The man is now faced with a choice; does he stay on the platform and burn alive, or does he jump more than 100 feet into freezing water? As the flames engulf the platform, the man makes the split-second decision to jump. Somehow, he survives the impact and is rescued by a boat before freezing to death. When asked why he jumped he replied "better probable death than certain death."

The apparent application of this story to a business context is that fear, survival instincts and extreme urgency are not only necessary, but desirable motivators for substantive change; as Kotter (1996:45) explains.

> Visible crises can be enormously helpful in catching people's attention and pushing up urgency levels. Conducting business as usual is very difficult if the building seems to be on fire. But in an increasingly fast-moving world, waiting for a fire to break out is dubious strategy. And in addition to catching people's attention, a sudden fire can cause a lot of damage.

While I did find some urgency helped motivate the CEOs to commence a journey of substantive personal change, my research suggests that urgency and fear are *not* what enabled the CEOs to sustain their journeys over time. As Kotter also seems to suggest in part, there are drawbacks and limitations to the 'burning platform' restriction of the fire metaphor. To explore the additional dimensions of motivation, I will explore a contrary application of the fire metaphor; that of 'burning ambition'.

In the first round of interviews, before I endeavoured to address 'how' the CEOs made the shift in their impact, I first asked them 'why' they decided to undertake a leadership journey in the first place. This question was of interest to me because having been on the journey with each CEO, I felt this content would provide a colourful, interesting and dramatic context for the narratives. An appreciation of the context was also important for the social constructionist methodology guiding this research. Furthermore, I was keen to get on the record what would possess a CEO to invest the time, money and energy which I knew to be incumbent in a journey of this nature.

As I reviewed the transcripts for the purpose of my interpretive analysis, I found that the CEOs not only revealed fear and, in some cases, crisis driven imperatives for change, their answers also revealed aspiration-driven motivations. There was an additional nuance to the CEOs' answers; their motivations

spanned both organisational and individual imperatives for change. In light of the proliferation of the burning platform metaphor in the business literature, I found these additional nuances fascinating and worthy of further exploration.

In our discussion following the first round of interviews, Skye questioned the need for further exploration of this aspect of the research since my study was concerned with the 'how' of leadership transformation, not the 'why'. In fact, she had suppressed the answers to the 'why' question in the Leximancer analysis altogether so that it would not interfere with our understanding of the 'themes' for leadership transformation as generated by the 'automatic concept generation' facility of Leximancer. It was my contention, though very formative, that certain elements of the 'why' answers potentially crossed over into the 'how' of leadership transformation. Consequently, I decided to explore this notion further in the second round of interviews directly.

The responses I received in this second round of interviews served to reinforce my interest in this area. I devised a four quadrant diagram represented by Figure 34 to make sense of their answers, and I will use this diagram to structure my insights below. First I will present my data for Quadrant 1 *organisational burning platform,* which emerged over the course of both rounds of CEO interviews, and proceed to discuss my insights for this quadrant before going on to the others.
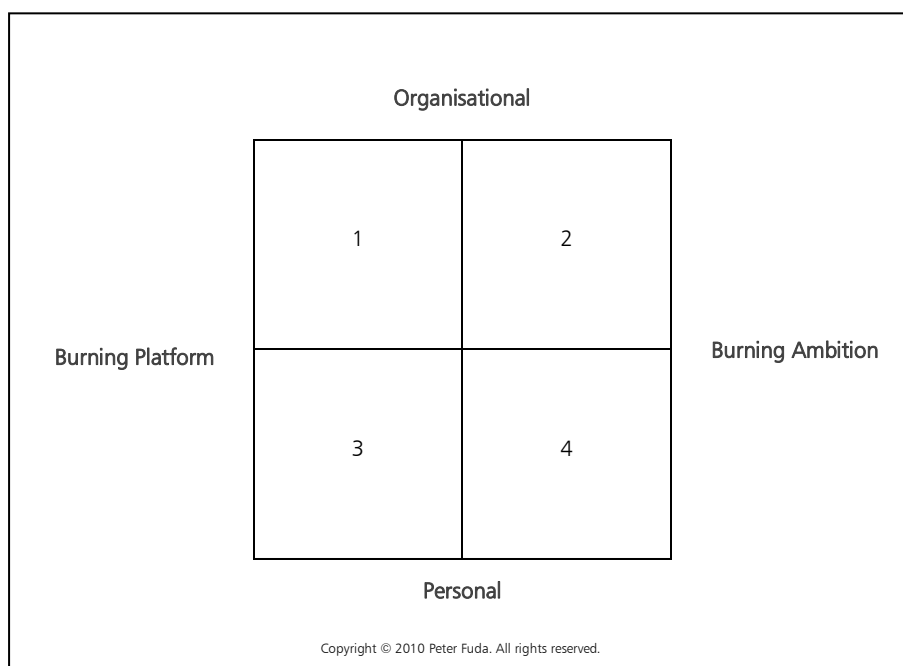
Figure 34: CEO Motivations for Transformation

Alan talked about the limited options for product sales growth at Bayer in a country where GDP growth had come largely from the services sector over the previous decade. He also talked about the Hewitt employee engagement data that he inherited from his predecessor which placed his organisation in the bottom 10% of all Australian employers. Despite coming off several years of growth at Beiersdorf, Clynton talked about the storm clouds he saw gathering on the horizon driven by ever more aggressive

competitors, and the increasing expectations of his large wholesale customers. Jim and Tim were both engaged in large reform agendas. Jim was charged with commercialising Queensland's science-driven Department of Primary Industries into an economic powerhouse; the most far reaching changes in this department since 1887. Tim's mandate was to prepare an Australian icon advertising agency for sale within the harsh realities a private equity environment. Mike, Paul and Dennis were all charged with correcting the negative financial trajectory of their respective organisations, and meeting the growth expectations of very demanding parent companies.

In recent times, I have discussed this quadrant with a very wide CEO audience, including the seven in this study. As a result of these discussions, I think the metaphor of the organisational burning platform is so pervasive that leaders seem to operate from the belief that nothing significant happens without a crisis. They also have to justify any large investments of time, money and resources to their stakeholders and the burning organisational platform seems to provide the easiest way to justify that investment. It is perhaps no surprise then, that the organisational burning platform was the first type of motivation articulated to me by the CEOs, as is evidenced in the narratives.

Now I will present the CEO data from the two rounds of interviews that fell into Quadrant 3 *personal burning platform.* As evidenced in the narratives, Alan was partly motivated to undertake his journey because he 'felt a little unsafe' considering he had never had a single formal performance appraisal in his 20 years with Bayer. Clynton undertook the journey because he 'was personally exhausted'. He also admitted to feeling insecure at leading an executive team where each member was older than him. Dennis was concerned that he 'would look really stupid' if he did not build some substance into the Asteron journey. For Jim, it was a realisation that his impact and behaviour would hold him back in his career and would 'burn me out and others'. Mike felt like 'an imposter.' Paul was wondering 'how in hell I was going to turn the company around' when he had limited leadership experience. And Tim felt that he had 'reached the limits of his natural toolset' and was 'quite a bit lost'.

While the CEOs spoke about their personal burning platforms as early as the first round of interviews in this research process, as it played out in practice, it actually took some time for them to reveal this motivation to me during our formal partnerships. In the earlier stages of my career, I didn't think it was important or appropriate to establish this level of intimacy. Considering the CEOs didn't offer it up easily, I suspect they didn't think it to be important or appropriate either. It was only after several weeks of interaction that they began to speak of these deeper and more personal motivations.

These dialogues opened up the opportunity to discuss the CEOs aspirations, not just their fears and worries. I now discuss the data from both rounds of interviews that is best represented by Quadrant 4 *personal burning ambition.*

For Paul, his personal burning ambition centred on the 'tremendous opportunity' to accelerate his development. Mike talked about the importance of his family. Jim talked about pursuing what he 'actually believed in' and aligning his work to a strong sense of 'purpose and meaning'. Clynton wanted to 'spend

more time thinking about the future'. Dennis was curious to see whether he could go beyond just remediating businesses and actually grow one. Alan wanted to explore a more spiritual form of leadership that was sparked by his time in India. He also spoke about broadening his definition of success to include 'happiness, a sense of purpose and a desire for contribution'. Tim connected with his desire to live 'a big and authentic life' and to bringing out the best in people by living his values of 'integrity, candour, humility, open-mindedness, respect and merit.'

It strikes me that, at least initially, the CEOs were far more ready and able to articulate their issues, fears and problems than their ambitions. As is evidenced in the narratives, I played a strong role in reconstituting the CEOs' stories about why they wanted to embark on a transformation journey by encouraging them to reflect on their purpose, vision, values and goals. I noticed a different energy in each of these CEOs when they shifted their focus from what they wanted to avoid, toward what they wanted to achieve. The shift I noticed was from expressions of fear, insecurity and perennial urgency, to a calmer, more deliberate and disciplined execution of the agreed actions which would realise their aspirations. Tim articulated how he experienced the shift from burning platform to burning ambition in the second round of interviews. I have decided to include his long and unedited quote below because I feel that it captures my experience with each other CEOs in this study, and highlights the potential limitations of fear-driven motivations for change.

> I definitely got kicked into this in the very first instance by a burning platform, a kind of survival instinct. The organisation needed a step-change in performance. My leadership model wasn't working for me personally, it was causing a kind of internal crisis for me. Through the process of transformation, my deep hope is that that's the last time I will ever be compelled to action in that way. Now, for me, it is always about burning ambitions. I think in the modern business context you can always find a crisis to respond to if you want. And that's why in business there are a lot of these the arsonist fire-fighters. That model exists a lot in the business world. That kind of stuff really gives me the shits. So these days I definitely much prefer to move *towards* something than *away* from something.

For my part, I found that understanding the CEOs' burning ambitions, such as Tim's deeply held desire to live a 'big and authentic life', gave me far greater leverage to keep them on track with their leadership journeys than did my knowledge of their burning platforms. Each of these leaders faced days in their journeys when it just felt too hard, where they encountered opposition, or where they were consumed by near term pressures which demanded immediate attention. My knowledge of the CEOs' most important aspirations allowed me to reorient and refocus them on their leadership journey in spite of these competing pressures, and allowed the CEOs to accept short term pain in the pursuit of longer term gain. As the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche famously said "he who has a *why* to live can bear almost any *how*."

While the burning platform may have provided the imperative for the CEOs to launch into a change agenda, the narratives suggest that it was their burning ambition that helped to sustain their journeys over time. The quote from author and teacher Stephen R. Covey below speaks to this idea.

> Motivation is a fire from within. If someone else tries to light that fire under you, chances are it will burn very briefly.

As I move to Quadrant 2 *organisational burning ambition*, I find Covey's quote still relevant even though I'm moving from a personal to organisational dimension of motivation. The data for this quadrant emerged over both rounds of interviews. For Alan, his ultimate ambition was not just to transform the culture of his company in Australia and New Zealand, but to make a Constructive impact globally. As is evidenced in his narrative, this led him to make decisions in his local environment knowing that these decisions would likely put him in the firing line of his superiors. In essence, his burning ambition for the organisation superseded his need for personal safety.

As Mike emerged from the many crises that engulfed the early months of his leadership reign, his ambition became to restore financial growth through the development of Constructive leadership. His ambition led him to take action on senior leaders who could not balance these two dimensions. Jim's ambition for the Department of Primary Industries was to transform it from a traditional science-based department, to a powerhouse of economic development. Rather than approach this ambition with the belligerence he had displayed in the Victorian Public Sector, Jim chose to use Constructive principles of behaviour to enlist his 4,000 staff in the cause.

Tim's personal ambition of a 'big and authentic life' translated to Leo Burnett in a desire to connect the creative energy of his advertising agency to social causes. This energy ultimately manifested itself in one of the largest social movements of recent years; Earth Hour. Clynton's ambition was to take Beiersdorf from a paternalistic culture to one where people could explore their leadership potential. This motivation stemmed from a desire to provide a sustainable future for his employees whom he cared about deeply. Paul's ambition for Getronics was to restore a sense of pride and achievement by instilling a set of values in the organisation that were congruent with his own.

Dennis', who was nearing retirement when he engaged in his leadership journey, wanted to leave a legacy of a growing organisation. Even when Dennis was encouraged into early retirement following the acquisition of the Promina Group by Suncorp, all of his energies remained focused on setting his organisation up for success beyond his tenure.

From my experience with the CEOs in this study, it would seem that when CEOs' 'fire within' extends beyond their personal ambition to an ambition for their organisations, they are more likely to sustain a journey of leadership transformation over time. Each of the examples above not only energised the CEOs, but provided them with a compelling story with which to light a fire in those they led.

Through the lens of the Circumplex, perhaps it's not surprising at all that I found the CEOs more compelled to sustain their journeys from their desires rather than their fears and crises. A Defensive impact is premised on the notion of encouraging a 'security' need in followers. By contrast, a Constructive impact is premised on the notion of encouraging a 'satisfaction need' in followers; something very akin to a burning ambition.

The 'snowball' metaphor is often used to describe the process whereby something small and potentially insignificant builds upon itself over time to become large and powerful. As it rolls down a snow-covered mountain, the snowball picks up more snow, increasing its mass and surface area. In popular culture, snowballs are a common cliché in cartoons and modern theatrics. For example, Road Runner cartoons have featured Wile E. Coyote being swept up in a snowball as he careers down a mountain.

My understanding of leadership transformation has been enhanced by the manner in which the snowball metaphor has been popularly applied in systems theory, and has infiltrated disciplines such as economics and organisation theory (e.g. McKinney, Schoch & Yonavjak, 2007; Ghemawat, 1990; Smolowitz, 1996). In systems theory, the 'snowball effect' is often used to illustrate a self-amplifying structure that feeds on itself; like a vicious or virtuous cycle. The snowball has two fundamentally different motions; round and round in a self reinforcing cycle and a linear trajectory along a straight line down a mountain, as represented in Figure 35.

Circular motion

Linear trajectory
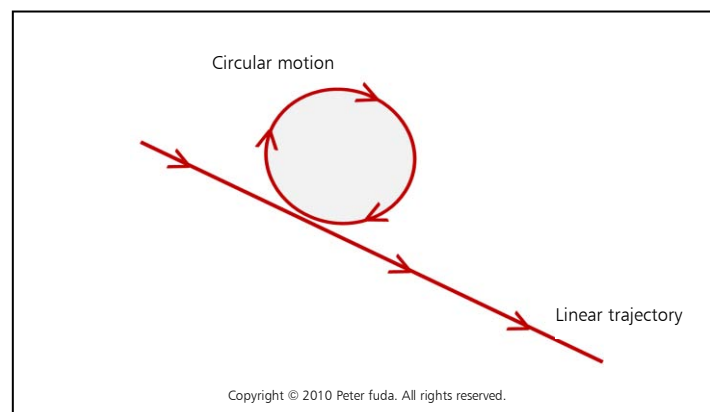
Figure 35: The Two Motions of a Snowball

These two motions of the metaphor help me to explore two core themes and several related concepts which emerged from the first and second round of interviews. The cyclical motion of the metaphor allows me to explore a mutually reinforcing cycle of *accountability* that developed between the CEOs and their subordinates who also partook in the leadership agenda. The linear trajectory inherent in the metaphor allows me to explore the sense of *momentum* toward the aspiration of Constructive leadership, which seems to have resulted from this mutual accountability.

The themes of accountability and momentum emerged out of my interpretive analysis from the first round of interviews. While all of the CEOs spoke around these themes in some way, in large part, it was Clynton who shaped these ideas in my mind. In his quote from this first round of interviews below, Clynton speaks to how momentum was created at Beiersdorf when the leadership agenda went beyond himself.

> It's like a continuous cycle. If you keep introducing new people to the cycle, and now it's at the next layer down within the organisation, it just actually makes the wheels spin faster, as more energy is unleashed. There's a nice model!

When I probed Clynton on what he thought was encouraging the wheels to spin faster, he spoke in some detail about the mutual accountability which was underpinning the momentum.

> So you've got the CEO at the middle, call it the nucleus. Then the first chain would be their executive team, and creating the commitment to have better leadership there. That becomes a loop because the executive team then place some form of pressure or accountability on their CEO to lift his game as they become more transparent, aware and skilled in leadership. And if you then chunk it down to the next circle, in Beiersdorf's particular instance, you not only had the next layer of leaders being skilled, you also had new people coming in to the organisation as well. They then place this positive energy back on their execs, to their managers, and also a separate line to me which is I suppose the negative or positive feedback in regards to how effective my team is in leading them. So my exec team get it directly, and I get it directly from my exec team but I also get it indirectly from the next layer of management as well.

I have included the two quotes above, even though they do not appear in Clynton's narrative, because they were critical to the origins of the snowball metaphor. In Clynton's narrative, I have included a quote from his presentation at the 11th Australian Conference on Leadership and Culture that builds on these earlier insights under the heading 'Gathering momentum'.

When we looked at the Leximancer analysis from the first round of interviews, the themes of momentum and accountability did not appear as discretely as Clynton describes, but there were several concepts which either expanded or fed into my understanding of these two themes. The related concepts thrown-up by Leximancer were creating a culture of *openness* to feedback, CEO *transparency* with the leadership data, and *commitment* to the principles of Constructive leadership. There were two other concepts which did not, on face value, appear to fit with these themes but were ultimately integrated into the metaphor of the snowball; *courage* on the part of the CEOs' as they made themselves vulnerable to the scrutiny of others, and the increase in *confidence* felt by the CEOs as their actions were met with positive feedback from others.

Skye and I discussed the potential relationships between all of these various concepts. These discussions led us to target the themes of accountability and momentum more directly with each of the CEOs in the second of interviews which, in turn, resulted in a more cohesive understanding about how all of these concepts related to one another. I will now use the snowball metaphor to explore the data from both rounds of interviews, and to present my insights on how the metaphor can enhance our understanding of leadership transformation.

First I will turn to the cyclical motion of the metaphor in an effort to shed light on the start point for the cycle of accountability. While it is sometimes challenging to work out the starting point for a vicious or virtuous cycle, the snowball metaphor allows us to conceptualise a 'tipping point'; that is, the point at which the snowball began rolling down the mountain. It became very clear in the second round of interviews that the point of no return for each CEO was when he went public with a commitment to close the gap between his leadership vision (*ideal* impact) and his present reality (*actual* impact). Their

responses enabled us to understand how the Leximancer-derived concepts of 'transparency' and 'commitment' fed into the accountability aspect of the snowball. As evidenced in all seven narratives, each CEO transparently shared his data in a group forum with his executive team in an exercise orchestrated by me, or in some cases, a member of my team. In a show of commitment to the principles of Constructive leadership, each CEO asked his direct reports to hold him accountable to his vision or *ideal* impact.

Practically speaking, the CEOs were now accountable to people under their direct authority. In a way, the CEOs flipped the traditional hierarchy of 'top-down' accountability and subjugated their positional power to the principles of Constructive leadership. Although each of the CEOs expressed some nervousness that they were making themselves vulnerable to their subordinates by exposing their weaknesses, they did it anyway, and with largely positive reactions. Mike, whose 'horrific' first measure made him the most vulnerable of all, was met by his team with a collective intake of breath and nervous laughter. Alan, whose unorthodox *ideal* impact profile made him almost as vulnerable as Mike, was also met with some humour but lots of feedback too. The calmer demeanours of Clynton, Dennis and Jim in their first Leadership/Impact® (Cooke, 1997) measure debrief, encouraged their teams to relax and provide lots of specific examples to help them get moving. The initially more defensive demeanour of Paul and Tim encouraged their teams to provide very specific examples also, but this time for the purpose of reinforcing some challenging data.

In the second round of interviews, the CEOs revealed several consequences that followed the sharing of their data with their executive teams, and of their commitments to change. This is where the cycle of accountability began to pick up some momentum. Firstly, despite the varied debrief experiences listed above, each of the CEOs got to a point of acceptance of their data very quickly aided by more open and ongoing conversations with their team members. For example, Paul says that his executive team "gave [him] example after example. [He] had nowhere to hide."

Secondly, by declaring their intent to change, the CEOs encouraged their teams to give them the benefit of the doubt as they made their first, often clumsy attempts to change. As explained by Tim, the very act of being open with his subordinates created a positive shift in his impact because people now had a "different story to tell themselves". For Tim, that story was shifting from a "Perfectionistic asshole" to someone who "doesn't want to have that impact, he wants to move".

Thirdly, making themselves open to feedback had the practical impact of enlisting a host of coaches from their executive teams who helped them align their *actual* impact with their *ideal* impact. For example, Ivan and Barry feature prominently in Paul's narrative, Tracey and Grant in Mike's narrative, Shane and Brad in Dennis' narrative, and Geoff and Glen in Alan's narrative.

It strikes me that there is a fourth important consequence of the CEOs' transparency and commitment to change in a group forum; there was now an implicit expectation that their executive team members would follow their lead. The revelation for me was that while the CEOs were relinquishing positional power, they seemed to be unwittingly acquiring an even stronger power with which to lead the

organisation. That power was a genuine commitment to the principles of Constructive leadership on the part of their subordinates that went beyond the implicit expectations of the CEOs. From the research interviews with the two direct reports of each CEO, we learned that the CEOs subordinates were encouraged to engage with Constructive leadership principles of their own accord. Part of this was down to the humility and *courage* which they perceived in their respective CEO's actions. Their responses enabled us to understand how the Leximancer-derived concept of 'courage' fed into the accountability aspect of the snowball.

Considering his data, Mike was perhaps the most courageous of all. Having worked very closely with Mike and his executive team during this time, the humility he showed was infectious. There was a shift among many members of his team from cynicism to more of a solution orientation. There was an emerging desire to accomplish something important together as a team. And there was a propensity among his team members to be more reflective of their own weaknesses before throwing stones.

He went into the initial debrief with about half of the team as supporters of his leadership and the other half as detractors. Following this session, his supporters became even more vocal and several of his detractors moved to at least a neutral position to give him a chance to make the changes he was committing to. The two or three who remained detractors following this session increasingly struggled to get a voice among their colleagues.

A snowball grows as it cycles on itself. The second round of interviews also highlighted that, with the exception of Tim, all of the CEOs grew their 'snowball' of accountability by extending the leadership journey to the direct reports of their executive teams. As for their executive teams, this inclusion came with the same serious undertone of accountability. Clynton told his expanded leadership team that "no one will be crucified for having a poor Circumplex" but that they "would be held accountable if they did not take steps to improve it". He later reflected that "there is a need to show people that this is a big deal, that it's a serious business imperative". Paul told his expanded leadership team "if you think you're going to get your numbers and be rewarded in the future, that's not going to be the case; you need to change your behaviour too." Even more explicitly, he went on to say that "if you don't change your behaviour, I don't want you working here".

In six of the seven cases, there were now three layers caught up in the snowball, and as per Clynton's quote above, everyone had accountability to each other to uphold the principles of Constructive leadership. A CEO could now be held accountable by someone two layers further down in the organisation. Perhaps even more powerful was that the CEO's executive team now found themselves compacted in the snowball between the layer above and the layer below. As I plotted out the storyline for each narrative, it struck me that this moment in time tended to coincide with an increase of momentum for each CEO's leadership journey.

Just like a snowball gathers momentum when more and more layers of snow are added, so too did the accountability cycle gather momentum when the CEOs added more layers. As is evidenced in the

narratives, each of the CEOs seized opportunities to expose their Leadership/Impact data to frontline employees; generally this happened during scheduled road shows or staff engagement forums. In several cases, this openness was awe inspiring; Clynton says that people were "blown away by how open I was" and the fact that "I was prepared to show them I had room to improve". Ivan, Paul's HR executive, talks about how Paul "blew away" a brand new group of frontline employees when he showed them his Leadership/Impact data and asked them to pull him up when he got off track. One of Alan's proudest moments was when he received an email following one of these sessions from an employee three layers down in his organisation saying that "it has been made quite clear to me that the 'good ship Bayer' is peopled by us...empowered to act, not by passengers." Similarly, Mike's first round of road shows to all 4,000 of his staff across 20 sites nationally encouraged very positive reactions. Mike reflects on the power of momentum below.

> Confidence and momentum are fascinating things. Some of it's deserved some of it not, but you take it anyway. And that helps fuel the success that you've had.

One antagonist of momentum is friction, which creates drag on the snowball. As evidenced in the narratives, each of the CEOs experienced friction in the form of team members who did not demonstrate the necessary commitment to their leadership journey. These team members threatened the aspirations of the CEO either by intentionally resisting the principles of Constructive leadership, or by symbolically undermining these principles through their inaction.

Paul exited James, a globally connected executive in Getronics and a repository of enormous technical knowledge. Alan exited Jody, his long serving and well-liked HR executive. Dennis parted company with John; one of two senior executives in New Zealand. Clynton talks about how his strong stance on Beiersdorf's new standards of behaviour was 'just too confronting' for some leaders who decided to leave of their own volition. Mike parted company with Ray, his best financial performer and long time colleague and personal friend. The key learning for me is captured by Mike below.

> I was absolutely amazed at the impact that [Ray's departure] had across the organisation. It rippled through the organisation very, very quickly. And I am pleased to say we continued to hit our numbers, the business didn't even miss a beat, it continued to grow.

It is my reflection that each of the CEOs in this study increased their Constructive impact in the eyes of their colleagues whenever they took such a difficult decision. Grant, Mike's Head of Strategy is a case in point. He reflected that 'it took courage for Mike to create an environment where standards were as important as performance. That gave us real license to hold people to account'.

A more sinister antagonist of momentum is an obstruction, which threatens to smash the snowball into oblivion. There are at least two major obstructions that come to mind from the CEO narratives. Alan hit a fairly large boulder in the form of Bayer headquarters who threatened to stop his Constructive leadership agenda completely. Interestingly, though Alan did not survive this obstruction, the leadership agenda had enough momentum to continue on in earnest through Bayer Australia's biggest division, Healthcare. Dennis hit a major obstruction in the form of the Suncorp acquisition of the Promina Group. Once again,

even though Dennis was replaced by a Suncorp recruit, the snowball continued to roll to everyone's surprise, including mine.

In both cases, I believe the number of people involved in the process, and the level of commitment they displayed toward the principles of Constructive leadership, literally allowed their snowballs to keep rolling over and around enormous obstructions even if the snowballs changed in size and form in order to keep rolling.

As I reflect on those CEOs with the longest journeys; namely Jim, Mike, Clynton and Paul, it occurs to me that the snowball acquired an even greater level of momentum when the new behavioural norms were formally embedded in the respective organisation's scorecard metrics, meeting structures, and performance systems. For example, even though Jim has since moved on from the Department of Primary Industries, his successor still executes Jim's Achievement Planning concept. This involves participants sitting in a circle with their boss, peers and subordinates to receive hard performance ratings on their goals, and their alignment to the agreed standards of behaviour. In CSC Australia, the company scorecard has clear measures and targets for alignment to Constructive behavioural norms even though Mike has since moved up to run Asia. In Clynton's organisation, all leadership meetings still begin an end with an assessment of progress to the shared standards. In Paul's organisation, his one-on-one meetings with his direct reports are still evenly split between reviewing progress to agreed goals, and discussing progress to leadership commitments and Getronics' values.

I now turn my attention to a part of the metaphor which the CEOs did not speak to in the interviews; the shaping of the snowball before the actual 'tipping point'. Here I am specifically referring to the contracting phase between me and the CEOs that preceded each leadership engagement. Aside from Alan, who was my first leadership client, I was very purposeful in shaping the CEO to role model the transparency and commitment which got the ball rolling.

Returning to the example of Mike; I felt compelled to manage the debrief of his data very carefully from the very beginning. In the lead up to our formal engagement, several people had painted a dark picture of Mike's leadership, including Tracey, his head of HR. Suspecting that Mike would receive very Defensive data, I was concerned that the change process could be over before it had even begun. To manage this risk, I asked Mike to agree to several principles that would underpin our formal engagement; that he would accept his data no matter what it said, that he would be the first member of his executive team to openly share his data, and that he would publicly declare his commitment to bridge the gap between his *ideal* and *actual* impacts. What I did with Mike worked so well under extreme circumstances that I then applied these principles to the five CEOs in this study who followed him.

Based on my experiences with the CEOs in this study, I am now much more conscious about the importance of the contracting phase as a precursor to transforming a leader's impact. With prospective clients, I spend some time up front trying to ascertain the leader's personal and organisational burning ambition so that the potential pain of transparency can be outweighed by the perceived importance of

the CEO's desired outcomes. I also share my learning that humility and commitment on the part of the CEO encourages a higher level of commitment to change than positional power. If the leader is still speaking to me at this point, I proceed to paint a dark picture where they may receive data that is highly Defensive and far removed from their self image. I then ask whether the leader would be prepared to demonstrate transparency and commitment under these circumstances. If the answer is no, I suggest they are not ready to embark on a journey of this nature.

I first tested the snowball metaphor with the four CEOs who were to accompany me on stage at the 11th Australian Conference on Leadership and Culture. In particular, I was interested in Clynton's reaction considering he set me off down this path. Clynton was so enamoured with the snowball that he actually adopted it into his presentation of his journey at the conference, and I have included an excerpt below.

> By engaging my executive team in the benefit of Constructive leadership, I set up an expectation of the kind of leader I aspired to be and one that they hold me accountable to. But by engaging the second level of leaders, they hold my executive team accountable as I do from another direction; and so it continues. It's like a massive snowball rolling down the hill, with me trapped in the middle.

4.4. MASTER CHEF

A 'master chef' is a person working in the culinary arts. A master chef draws upon the science of food to artfully create a gastronomic experience which is pleasing to the palate and the eye. The culinary arts have inundated popular culture of late elevating cooking from its humble origins of human sustenance to a social phenomenon. Prominent chefs like Gordon Ramsay, Jamie Oliver, Thomas Keller, Ferran Adria and Anthony Bourdain have achieved global celebrity status through their restaurants, books, TV shows and product endorsements. Australia's highest rating TV show in 2009 and 2010 was a show actually called *MasterChef*; a reality program where amateur chefs compete for the title of *MasterChef* under the tutelage of celebrity chefs. These examples are symbolic of how cooking has become somewhat of a theatrical art form in recent times.

I have chosen the metaphor of the master chef as one of my seven metaphors because it has two useful applications which help me explore the interview data. Firstly, the metaphor helps me to explore how the CEOs transitioned from the leadership equivalent of amateur cook to chef or culinary artist. Secondly, the idea of transcending food science to culinary art allows me to explore how the seven CEOs in this study moved beyond the leadership 'science' to a more masterful use of the *frameworks*, *tools* and *strategies*; three themes that emerged from the interview data. The quote below from legendary French chef Marcel Boulestin really captures the nuance that I am interested in.

> Cookery is not chemistry. It is an art. It requires instinct and taste rather than exact measurements.
> Marcel Boulestin

Just like the chef use *recipes*, *utensils* and *cooking* methods in an effort to produce a particular culinary experience, so to can a leader employ *frameworks*, *tools* and *strategies* in an attempt to achieve transformation. The concepts of frameworks, tools and strategies emerged from the first round of interviews as three often quoted ideas in both the interpretive and Leximancer analysis. Upon closer examination, the Leximancer analysis revealed that these words 'travelled closely together' in the interview transcripts. Following the first round of interviews, I was not surprised that the Leximancer analysis suggested that frameworks, tools and strategies were prevalent concepts. After all, they were experienced by each of the CEOs as part of our standard approach to transformation and are, by their fairly tangible nature, readily accessible.

Given my scepticism for purely 'scientific' explanations of leadership transformation, I confess that I was concerned that the CEOs gravitated strongly toward these concepts in the first round of interviews. There are an abundance of frameworks available for those seeking to make change, and the tools and strategies that the CEOs refer to in this study are employed by thousands of leaders and change agents in Australia alone. Yet despite the ready availability and broad usage of frameworks, tools and strategies, stories of transformation seem to be relatively rare. Nonetheless, I committed to explore these concepts more fully in the second round of interviews since they emerged as important to the CEOs. What emerged for me in this second round of interviews was a far more nuanced and subtle appreciation of how the 'artful'

application of these concepts helped the CEOs to transform their Leadership/Impact. I will now break down my insights on each concept using the master chef metaphor.

The first element of the master chef metaphor that I will explore is the chef's equivalent of a recipe. For a chef, a recipe provides the structure and process to guide food preparation. In my language, a recipe represents the carefully crafted *frameworks* of milestones, interventions, timeframes and commitments that provided the structure for each CEO's leadership journey. Through the Leximancer analysis, it became clear that each of the CEOs in the study used words like 'discipline', 'structure', 'systematic', 'rigorous', and 'process' to describe the formal process that provided the structure for our interactions.

In the second round of interviews, when I probed around what value the frameworks offered to the CEOs in helping them shift their impact, what the CEOs appeared to value was how they brought structure and discipline to what might otherwise have been a fairly esoteric concept of 'leadership transformation'. It is evident that the frameworks resonated particularly well with the more financially oriented CEOs like Paul, Dennis and Mike.

Just like an amateur cook takes comfort from a recipe, so too did the CEOs take comfort from the frameworks I developed for our engagements. From the narratives, it is evident that Paul "followed the process meticulously" because he trusted that I had the 'science' of leadership transformation which he lacked. Dennis used it to "formally organise [his] thinking about where he was up to". This gave him some comfort because even though he had a big gap to close in his impact, he could see the steps laid out in a practical way. Mike says that our framework represented a "thorough approach...the intersection of the theory into practice" and encouraged a sense of discipline in a team who lacked a cohesive plan of their own.

I feel it is important to explicitly disclose the underlying principles of the frameworks experienced by the CEOs; that is, to share the 'recipe', since I was focused on this in a way that they were not. Each of the leadership frameworks was rarely less than 12 months in duration based on my belief that leadership transformation does not happen at a two-day offsite. There was a mix of team and individual interventions, with the team interventions rarely scheduled more than two to three months apart. For example, individual interventions allowed me to take a deep dive into the respective CEO's goals, issues and progress, while the team interventions promoted accountability among the CEO and his team. Each scheduled intervention articulated desired outcomes, roles and commitments in order to align expectations well in advance.

While all of this sounds quite rigid and a little 'scientific', in practice, my frameworks were very fluid in order to cope with the changing business context of the CEO in question. I liken this to how a chef alters a recipe to respond to changing seasons, tastes and occasions. For example, I would regularly change the timing, content or sequence of interventions to capitalise on changes in the strategic context of the CEO's organisation. In fact, from Mike onwards, I quickly found the frameworks so context bound that I only ever did very detailed plans in three month time horizons. It strikes me that while the CEOs drew comfort

from the apparent stability of the frameworks, it was the more fluid and 'artistic' application of the frameworks within a changing strategic context which helped the 'amateur cooks' accelerate their transformation journeys.

The second element of the master chef metaphor I will focus on is the chef's equivalent of 'utensils'; in my language, *tools*. Like chefs, leaders have many tools at their disposal, but all of the CEOs in this study specifically highlighted the importance of the Leadership/Impact Circumplex tool itself in the first round of interviews, for their respective transformations. Again, this was not a surprise for me since this tool was central to how the CEOs experienced transformation. It was also part of my 'pitch' to each CEO during the contracting phase so they were under no illusions about my partiality toward it, for all the reasons I have already discussed in the opening chapter of this thesis. As I delved deeper into the value of the tool to the CEOs in the second round of interviews, it became apparent that it was not the tool itself that accelerated the CEOs transformation, but the artful application of this tool by the CEOs, me and my colleagues. I use the example of a sushi chef to explore this idea further.

Sushi chefs have an artful application of their sushi knives developed over many years. An amateur chef using the same tools is unlikely to replicate their artful application. They are also unlikely to have a full appreciation for how dangerous these tools can be when used with poor technique. Through my interviews with these CEOs, it became apparent the Leadership/Impact tool possessed the same inbuilt dangers and required artful application. I consider part of the art with this tool was enabling the CEOs to interpret their data in a way that enabled them to accept their feedback and move to action. Jim and Dennis provide particularly powerful cases in point because both had previously experienced Circumplex technology with other consultants in advance of our respective engagements. For me, Jim's quote on his first Circumplex experience below speaks to a very poor context and story for interpreting his results.

> When the results came in I was shocked...and I wanted to kill the bastards that had actually filled in the questionnaire. I wanted to know who they were!

Similarly, Dennis' story for his first experience led him to conclude that "the entire process was bullshit". Contrast these two reactions with the very different stories Jim and Dennis developed around their Leadership/Impact Circumplex results. Jim concluded that "the Leadership/Impact tool was very powerful. It allowed me to link how I was working against the key underpinnings of an achieving culture". In contrast to his first story, Jim now saw his results in a very strategic context; that of creating an achievement-oriented culture that would ultimately transform the Department of Primary Industries in Queensland from a science and regulatory body to an economic development agency.

Similarly, Dennis' quote below shows how he was able to create an empowering story to interpret his Leadership/Impact Circumplex results; even though the data was just as Defensive as his first "bullshit" experience.

> It didn't attack me as an individual; it actually went to what my impact was. So it was relatively easy in my mind to step back and say 'well they're not saying I'm a particularly good or bad person, their saying that the impact I'm having is not the impact I desire to have.'

Just like Jim, the story that Dennis created about his data, albeit with some help from me, encouraged him to drop his defences and accelerate toward purposeful action.

Returning to the sushi analogy, this food has a language all of its own based on its Japanese origins. Sushi chefs must have an intimate knowledge of this language in order to communicate with their restaurant colleagues. From the interview data, it became evident that the Leadership/Impact tool was helpful in creating a shared language for the CEOs and their colleagues. Tim's quote below shows the power of this shared language when it becomes a part of daily conversations.

> A lot of the real richness came in the conversations that followed [the debrief of Leadership/Impact data], and when my team and I started to get a common language, it just gave us a way to talk about it. And even to this day - more than two years after I've been introduced to the tool, me and those around me I've been working with, we still use that language on a day-to-day basis.

In my experience with these seven CEOs, the sense of shared language that Tim is referring to is encouraged by two aspects which are built into the Circumplex tool; the three colours which are used to describe a Constructive (blue), Aggressive-Defensive (red), and Passive-Defensive (green) impact, and the depiction of these three colours in a circular graph. Of the 80 pages in their Leadership/Impact folders filled with theory, methodology and detailed statistical data, it is this one 'picture' which seemed to occupy the CEOs' attention during their journeys. Through my conversations with the CEOs during this research study, I have come to understand that it is the perceived rigour of the tool that encourages them to trust the one page. In effect, I believe the power of the tool for these seven CEOs was that it contained the perceived complexity to establish credibility, but the simplicity required for action.

I feel it is important to include a disclaimer about the Leadership/Impact tool at this point. In all of my engagements with the CEOs in this study, the Leadership/Impact tool was only ever a means to an end. For me, the goal was never about achieving 'more blue'; it was about connecting 'more blue' to the CEOs' most important individual, team and organisational outcomes.

In the early days of my consulting career, my penchant to focus on business outcomes over the Leadership/Impact tool was more by necessity than by design; I did not have the theoretical and statistical substance to make the tool the cornerstone of my approach. Over time, while I have developed some of this substance, it has remained my choice not to get lost in the theoretical and statistical underpinnings of the tool.

The third element of the master chef metaphor that I will explore is the chef's equivalent of 'cooking methods' such as frying, boiling and baking. In my language, these cooking methods represent the specific strategies for creating each CEO's desired impact. Within the 80 page Leadership/Impact folder, participants receive feedback on how they are using ten leadership strategies; either 'prescriptively' to guide and direct or 'restrictively' to constrain and inhibit. These strategies are detailed in *Appendix A – Human Synergistics Theory and Methodology* but the underlying theory contends that the more leaders use the ten strategies 'prescriptively', and the less they use them 'restrictively', the more Constructive their impact will become.

That said, the creator of the Leadership/Impact methodology and strategies Dr Rob Cooke openly concedes that 'there are potentially numerous factors that explain the impact of leaders. Some...are likely under the control of the leader-such as his or her leadership styles and strategies; other factors – including the personal characteristics of the people being impacted- are somewhat more difficult to change' (1997: 39).

It appears from the narratives that the Leadership/Impact strategies provided a useful and immediate way for the CEOs to move from acceptance of their data, to taking some purposeful action. I have included a long excerpt from Dennis' narrative because he highlights several learnings for me on this point.

> The thing that is really good about the Leadership/Impact tool is it gave me a few strategies, which weren't particularly complicated, to overcome the identified gaps in my impact. It seemed intuitively obvious that I should at least attempt to apply those strategies in daily life. I mean I wasn't completely bloody stupid! It seemed to me that if the strategy is there, and that it does actually help you overcome what you don't want to be, then you should actually try it.

Firstly, he states the obvious fact that the Leadership/Impact strategies are included in the overall Leadership/Impact data and process. This is contrary to many 360 degree feedback tools which leave the participant to figure out on their own how to go about making change. Secondly, Dennis highlights that the strategies are relatively simple; something that is also strongly endorsed by Paul and Clynton in their narratives. Thirdly, through his irony, Dennis highlights his underlying assumption that the strategies will help him make change.

In the second round of interviews, I learned that there was a deeper undertone to the respective CEO's adoption of the Leadership/Impact strategies; at some point, each of them accepted that giving up control would lead to better outcomes. For Dennis, Clynton and Jim, the desire to give up control was a key part of their motivation for engaging in a leadership journey; Clynton was "exhausted" and both Dennis and Jim were thinking about their leadership legacies. When Dennis stopped giving his direct reports 'the answer' and began asking them questions instead, he simultaneously encouraged Achievement in others and decreased Dependence on himself. When Clynton and Jim used the techniques of silence and stillness in executive team meetings respectively, they similarly relinquished control and encouraged others to find their leadership voices. As a result, they approached the Leadership/Impact strategies with a predetermined objective to be less 'restrictive'.

For Alan, Mike, Tim and Paul, it appears that their giving up of control was initially less conscious and more an outcome of successfully applying the Leadership/Impact strategies. As they got increasingly positive outcomes from applying the strategies in more prescriptive and less restrictive ways, I would try to make connections for them between their positive outcomes and the giving up of control incumbent in the way they were now using the Leadership/Impact strategies.

Much like a chef whose cooking techniques become more intuitive and less measured over time, in my experience with these seven CEOs over the years, I observed them use the Leadership/Impact strategies more and more intuitively. I use a long excerpt below, this time from Tim's narrative, because he really

captures how I saw the CEOs evolve in their approach to the Leadership/Impact strategies from the point of their initial action planning onwards.

> At first, I would work down the list [of leadership strategies] one action at a time and I would have very specific actions and goals against most of the ten strategies. By the time I had worked with the tool for a year or so, it became much more intuitive. But still once every three or four months, it is on my pin board, right, so I will still turn around and look at it and just skim down the list and say what am I missing? What else could I be doing?

Though they became more intuitive with the Leadership/Impact strategies over time, as Tim exemplifies above, they anchored themselves back in the theory periodically in different ways. For example, Tim's anchoring occurred at time-based intervals to ensure that he was constantly leveraging the full potential of the strategies. For Dennis, it occurred dynamically in our regular one-on-one breakfasts as we applied the strategies to his ever changing leadership challenges. Paul was perhaps the most disciplined in his anchoring back to the strategies; he did this in preparation for any event in which he wanted to maximise his Constructive impact. Far from stifling their intuitive use of the strategies, I actually think the CEOs' anchoring practices allowed them to be even more 'artful' and less choreographed in their application of the strategies.

The master chef metaphor also encourages us to understand cooking in the context of those who experience the meal. Chefs will choose recipes, utensils and cooking methods in order to create a culinary experience that suits the context in which it served. For example, they would generally not serve fast food in a fine dining restaurant. Similarly, the CEOs and I endeavoured to apply frameworks, tools and strategies to produce an impact in response to particular business contexts. Just like a culinary experience can only be judged by the diners, we can only understand a leader's impact through the experience of those who are impacted. If we accept that a leader's attempt to create a Constructive impact is context-bound and experiential in nature, then configuring the frameworks, tools and strategies to this changing context is more of an art form than a science.

4.5. COACH

The word 'coach' originates from the Hungarian town of 'Kocsi', which lent its name to the 'Kosc cart' in the 16th century; a large closed carriage used to transport passengers. The metaphorical interpretation of the 'Kosc cart' or 'coach' as it translates in English is a person who transports people from a state of ignorance to one of knowledge (Harper, 2010). The application of the metaphor to mean a trainer or instructor surfaced around 1830 at Oxford University to denote a tutor who 'carries' a student through an exam. The first use of the term 'coach' in relation to sports surfaced in 1861 (Harper, 2010).

Today, 'coaching' is present in a wide range of professional disciplines including psychology, education and leadership. In these disciplines, coaching tends to be associated with one to one consultation conducted in a private setting which is usually detached from one's usual work setting. In contrast, my research has led me to explore the sporting application of the metaphor as it applies to the leadership journeys of the seven CEOs in this study. There are three reasons why I have chosen the sporting application of the metaphor; sporting teams may receive coaching from a variety of sources beyond the head coach, this coaching will often happen in public as well as private settings, and the sporting application of the metaphor allows me to distinguish between the roles of captain and coach. Importantly, this theme is not about the CEOs *becoming a coach*. It is about how they enabled themselves to *be coached* by others.

He that is taught only by himself has a fool for a master. Hunter S. Thompson

Judged against American journalist Hunter S. Thompson's quote above, the seven CEOs in this study were no fools. In the first round of interviews, in both the Leximancer and interpretive analysis, the CEOs between them identified three distinct stakeholder groups who they felt supported their journeys of transformation. The first group were the external consultants; predominantly referring to me, my colleagues, or the name of my organisation. The second group was their executive team colleagues, and the third group were comprised of family members. In the second round of interviews, I explored more systematically with all of the CEOs who they felt were the significant people that accelerated their journeys, and what were the specific roles that each party played. These interviews reiterated the importance, to the CEOs, of the three groups identified in the first round of interviews. Through our discussions, I came to learn about the significance of the role I played as each CEOs coach. I also came to understand that the other two groups were providing a complimentary but unique form of coaching support.

I arrived at the image of football boots to represent the metaphor of 'coach' in conversation with Paul who has had a penchant for comparing leadership and rugby as long as I have known him. Paul got me thinking that any code of football requires distinct roles both within and around the team, and these roles seemed to lend themselves to the stakeholder groups identified by the CEOs. Within this metaphor, I liken

the CEO in question to the captain of the football team, me and the other external consultants as the coaching staff, his executive team as the other players on his team, and his family as supporters.

Football metaphors are not new in leadership, and are often analogous with individualistic and competitive behaviours. My interpretation of this metaphor, however, is quite different. In my appreciation of the metaphor, football is a team sport. Teams comprised of superstar individuals often lose to cohesive teams of apparently inferior players. There is almost always a distinction between captain and coach and it not assumed that these roles are readily interchangeable. Though the captain is supported by a coach, he often has a coaching role with team members. Finally, while the captain may have been selected into this role because of assumed leadership capability, he cannot be successful without a consistently strong performance from his team.

The support role that the CEOs spoke about most throughout the interview process was that of the coaching staff; in particular the role played by me and in some instances, my colleagues who led various consulting engagements within the CEOs' organisations. Methodologically, I have already addressed why my story is inseparable from those of the CEOs. As a consequence, the narratives are already sprinkled with my intermittent coaching insights and learnings. Since the narratives are specific to each CEO, have been written chronologically rather than thematically, and take place over a seven year period, only now can I make sense of my coaching insights in a more cohesive fashion for the reader.

It is apparent to me from the narratives that one of the things the CEOs valued from me as a coach was the provision of leadership content and expertise. This is what I would call the football coach equivalent of the 'playbook'. For example, Jim says that I brought "thought leadership" and "strategic thinking". Dennis says that I gave him "useful insights and tools" and "planted small seeds that were useful". The irony is that, at least in the early days, I didn't have much of a playbook at all. When I began working with Alan back in 2001, my playbook consisted of one play only; leadership creates culture and culture creates performance. I survived and thrived with Alan by asking good questions which helped him think differently about his challenges and come to new and more empowering conclusions. It took several years for me to actually develop a playbook of any note. Paradoxically, this playbook that the CEOs seemed to value so highly was, and remains, a work in progress that has actually been developed with their help. This may be why several of the CEOs were surprised and pleased to discover, upon reviewing their respective narratives, how much I had learned from each of them over the years.

From the narratives, it is also apparent that the CEOs appreciated how I put the playbook into action with them. I use a quote from John Wooden, revered as one of the most successful sporting coaches in America of all time and author of *Wooden on Leadership (2005)*, to illustrate this point.

> A coach is someone who can give correction without causing resentment. Coach John Wooden

The CEOs seemed to value the very direct manner in which I provided my coaching insights and feedback to them. While there are examples of direct interventions in each of the seven narratives, Tim's

recollections on this subject are the most memorable and insightful for me; hence my use of his extended quote below.

> The power of those interventions - you really inserted yourself in my mind quite aggressively. I honestly believe, and I don't think I am exaggerating, left to my own devices, I really think it would have taken me fifteen years to sort of never to make the changes that those interventions created in a couple of profound giant strides.

In discussion with the CEOs over the course of this research project, I have come to understand that there were several reasons why my direct interventions were helpful for leadership transformation. As Tim highlights above, these interventions interrupted unhelpful patterns and saved the CEOs time and energy by getting straight to the heart of the matter at hand when it might otherwise have gone on for some time.

Tim goes on to say that he got a direct dose of reality which was 'really interruptive', that he 'felt chastised in a healthy way'. One outcome of this approach with Tim was to 'change the power dynamics' between him and me. While it may appear dangerous to 'chastise' a paying customer and 'change the power dynamics', I had very different objectives in mind; to give the respective CEO what he needed, and to model the 'harder' edges of Constructive leadership. As I have reflected on several occasions during the narratives, it was a big moment when the penny dropped for each CEO and he realised that being 'blue' did not necessarily mean being 'nice'.

It seemed that the unintended consequence of my very direct style of intervention was a perception of selflessness on my part by the CEOs. For example, Dennis says that 'you...spoke the truth to us when it would have been easier not to'. While this perception was very helpful, selflessness was not my motivation. It was in my best interests to help the CEO transform and a direct style of intervention was just one way of encouraging this transformation.

At this point of the coach theme, I wish to make clear what I am *not* saying in what I have just outlined above. I am not advocating that change agents, armed with nothing but good intent, go forth and dump a barrage of abrasive insights on their paying customers or CEO bosses. In conversation with the CEOs over the years, we have spoken openly about why they have tolerated and, indeed welcomed my very direct style of coaching. The insights from these conversations have helped me to minimise the risk associated with my direct style of coaching.

With each of these CEOs, the permission to provide direct coaching was always established before I had to give it. Using Tim as the example, our earliest conversations established that he wanted to project calm and discipline to his organisation, and that what he wanted from me as his coach was to keep him on track to this vision. I have learned that this is the moment to clarify what 'keep him on track' looks like in practical terms so, with my tongue firmly in my cheek, I asked him if he would prefer me to tell him what I thought in the most precise and direct manner possible, or whether he would prefer a more 'warm and cuddly' approach. Despite the apparent humour, both Tim and I understood this to be a very serious

moment in our bourgeoning relationship; I am effectively asking Tim to sign up for a future of direct interventions.

I had very similar contracting conversations with six of the seven CEOs in this study, including Tim. Alan, who was my first big client, was the exception. As is evidenced from his narrative, since I did not have this conversation early on in our relationship, it took me some time to get to a similar level of directness to the other CEOs.

The value of this early contracting for direct coaching can be seen in many of the big moments in Tim's narrative. In those moments, I would connect Tim back to his vision and remind him of his contracting commitment. For example, 'Tim, I know you are very serious about your vision to be a calm, confident and disciplined leader and you have asked me to keep you on track to this vision'. As Tim gave me a look which suggested he wanted a cuddle, I delivered the very direct message we both knew he really needed; 'right now, in your appearance and your communication, you are projecting absolute chaos'. Based on my experience with these seven CEOs, both good and bad, I now feel that contracting for direct coaching is so critical that I formalise this commitment into the written contracts with my CEO clients before we begin our formal engagements.

Beyond contracting and coaching technique, my disclaimer to fellow change agents goes one step further. As I reflect on the narratives, I believe my ability to provide very direct coaching to the CEOs was predicated on very high levels of trust. Some of this trust was established prior to our formal engagement but I believe most of it was built through our interactions over time. My goal, then, is to try and deconstruct this concept of 'trust', as I experienced it with these seven CEOs.

Mike says that 'the process required me to have a degree of faith and trust...I think it helped that you had that credibility, history and experience...[and that] you had done this 400 times before'. Alan pointed to my time at Westpac and The Bulletin article which positioned me as an expert in change management at the upper echelons of one of Australia's top ten companies. Clynton first met me as the keynote speaker for a CEO Forum event that he attended. All of this leads me to believe that 'perceived credibility' opened the door for me to build deeper elements of trust.

Having established a level of perceived credibility with the seven CEOs in this study, I then had to match my delivery to their expectations. In effect, I had to establish a level of 'integrity'. My belief is that this perceived integrity was developed through many interactions with each CEO over several years; some big moments and some small. In the big moment with Tim that I describe above, my direct coaching not only kept him on track to his vision, it demonstrated that I would deliver on my commitments even in the most difficult of situations. As I reflect in Dennis' narrative, I felt reliability was like a currency in our relationship, and at some point I got 'into the black'. Dennis reflects that 'you delivered everything you said you would...as soon as you had earned that trust, you were indispensible to me'.

Even though credibility and integrity are subjective notions, I was able to find ways where I could make them tangible; even for an actuary like Dennis. Somewhat more difficult to classify is a perception of good

'intent', yet I believe this was the most important element underpinning the trust between me and the CEOs. Alan is a good case in point because even though we lacked the explicit contract for direct coaching early in our relationship, over time he developed an unquestioning level of trust for my intent. In his own words 'your relationship with me was one of total trust. I never questioned your motivation... that's probably why you could give me feedback that very few people could'.

As I reflect on this concept of intent, I am reminded of a time some years ago when I was playing around with an idea to try and explain why most of my commercial partnerships were mutually successful, but a few others ended in tears for one or both parties. I developed a simple grid to help me make sense of this question where the dimensions of values (beliefs and standards) and value (return on effort or investment) were represented across four quadrants as per Figure 36 below.

High Values

1: Friend	2: Partner
3: Stranger	4: User

Low Value   **High Value**
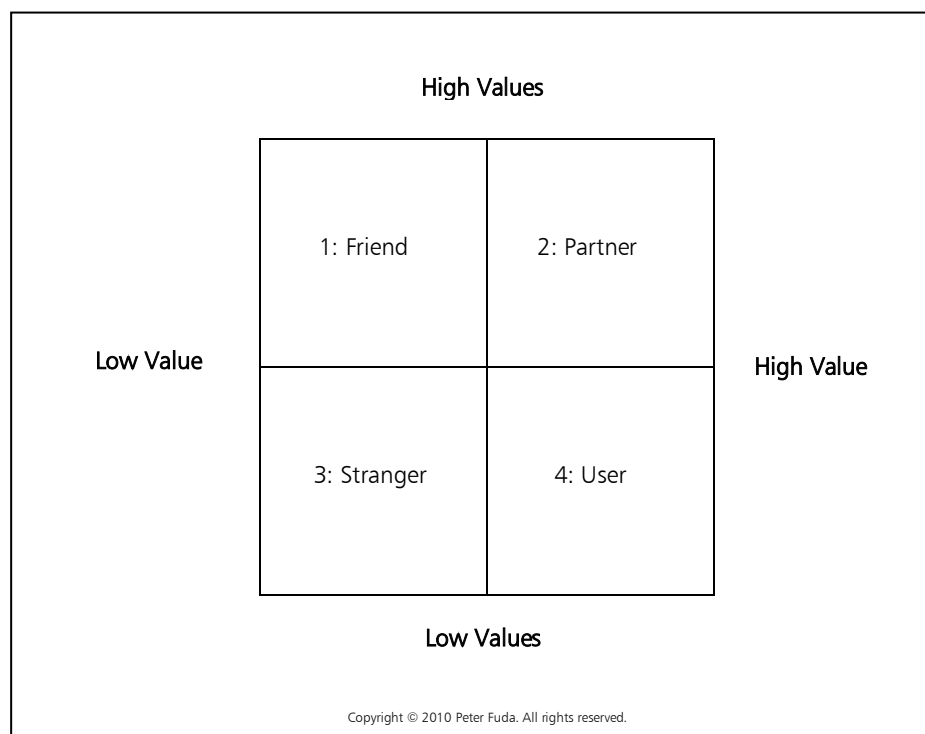
Low Values

Figure 36 : Values – Value Grid

What I found was that I had intuitively steered clear of any relationships in Quadrant 3; low values and low value alignment, such that these types of partnerships were 'strangers' to me. Quadrant 1; high values and low value alignment comprised ex-clients whom I liked to stay in contact with, or prospective clients where we shared similar values and beliefs but did not yet have a mutually beneficial value proposition. I found that the few partnerships which ended poorly were in Quadrant 4; low values and high value alignment. These partnerships looked good on the surface because of the apparent rewards, but inevitably became very hard work and highly transactional in nature. Quadrant 2 was where all my successful partnerships were; to quote a cliché, there was a win-win for me and the client. As I reflect

now on all seven CEOs in this study, each of them was in Quadrant 2 for the duration of our formal engagements, and Quadrant 1 when we were not formally engaged.

I think the reason why these seven CEOs trusted my intent is because we were always values aligned but only ever engaged in commercial activities when there was a value exchange. For example, Jim was in Quadrant 1 for three years because we could not find the commercially viable exchange of value that would move us into Quadrant 2. The need to find a value alignment was always a very transparent and pragmatic conversation with each of the CEOs and I believe it perpetuated the high levels of trust in my intentions that they speak to in the narratives. These elements of credibility, integrity and intent were even more nuanced as my colleagues became involved in the CEOs' journeys.

In most football teams, the head coach is supported by a coaching staff. In all but Alan's case, one of the Account Directors in my company played a supporting role in coaching the respective CEOs. This role was in addition to leading our broader engagements with the respective CEO's organisation, coaching the members of his executive team, and sometimes coaching the direct reports of the executive team. The roles played by the Account Directors placed them in a unique position to uncover insights that could help improve the Constructive impact of the CEOs on their organisations. In the early stages of each relationship, the Account Directors would bring me these insights such that I could deliver them to the CEOs in my regular coaching sessions. Having these eyes and ears in the CEOs' organisations provided me with a detailed context for all of my coaching interactions.

Over time, the Account Directors were able to provide more and more of these insights directly to the CEOs, as is evidenced by the manner in which Leanne established her own coaching relationship with Clynton. Again, I believe it was the building of trust that allowed the Account Directors to step into more of an advisory role with the CEOs over time; that is, trust in their credibility, integrity and intent. Good intent was generally assumed by the CEO because firstly, there was a strong values alignment between me and the Account Directors, and secondly, the Account Directors benefited from the 'win-win' value proposition agreed between me and the CEO. The credibility for the Account Directors was partly established by their own credentials, partly by me positioning them as content experts in the delivery of transformation interventions, and partly by association with my own perceived credibility. While the Account Directors benefitted from the positive intent and credibility which was largely established by me with the CEOs, I benefited greatly from the integrity they built through delivery excellence. This was something they were uniquely placed to do given the sheer volume of interventions and interactions they had with individuals and teams in the CEOs' organisations through the natural course of our work.

Using the football metaphor, a captain's success is generally contingent upon the support of his team members. This is where the metaphor helps extend our understanding of coaching from the often held assumption of two people behind closed doors, to a dynamic environment involving multiple people in both planned and emergent interactions. From the narratives, it is evident that each CEO in this study feels that they could not have transformed their impact without the contribution of his team. For example, Clynton says that the feedback from his team 'really helped fuel the fire for me to continue on

that journey'. Jim says that 'a seminal moment for me was the interaction with 70 senior staff where I got direct feedback on my leadership effectiveness'. Paul says that in response to his justifications of his first Circumplex result, his executive team 'gave me example after example. I had no place to hide'.

In some ways, the CEOs' sentiment about their teams is not surprising to me; part of the support they received was by design. The frameworks we employed with each CEO's organisation over time included at least quarterly group coaching interventions where the CEO and his whole executive team participated in the giving and receiving of feedback on his impact. There are reasons of principle and practicality for including group coaching in our frameworks. At a principle level, as I have outlined already in *Chapter 2. Methodology,* I believe that leaders can only claim 'transformation' through the experience of those they lead. It would stand to reason then, that I would build structured coaching interaction between these parties. At a practical level, executive team members spend far more time with their CEO than I or my colleagues do. The group coaching forums provide a relatively safe and structured environment for team members to provide coaching to the CEO based on insights they have accumulated through frequent interaction and close observation.

What really interested me from the interviews with the CEOs were the examples where this upward coaching took place informally. My favourite example was from Alan's narrative.

> Glen told me that I talked too much and listened too little; that I was always pitching and selling my ideas. I told him to do whatever it takes to stop me doing this. The next day he brought in a roll of gaffer tape and put it on the table in a management meeting. I got the message.

Alan's quote illustrates how the organised group coaching processes, in which he received Glen's initial feedback that he talked to much, took on a life of their own outside of our orchestrated interventions. I believe that the formal coaching processes encouraged an environment which made the more informal coaching of the CEO by his subordinates possible, and even natural. As I reflected in Alan's narrative, the emergence of an informal support group, including Glen and several trusted team members, seemed to create a real acceleration point in Alan's journey by giving him real time feedback on his impact. This was true for several of the CEOs including Mike, who had Tracey and Grant, Paul, who had Ivan and Barry, and Dennis, who had Brad and Shane. It strikes me that as all parties came to see their success contingent upon their fellow team members' success, a platform was established for the giving and receiving of challenging feedback.

The football metaphor allows me to consider one final stakeholder group who was vested in the CEOs' success; the supporters. In this case, those supporters were the respective CEO's family. As can be seen from the narratives, family featured in all seven cases in some way. In four of those cases, we have specific examples of direct coaching by family members of the CEO in question. When we think of supporters, we often imagine passionate people cheering the team on. This was very much Tim's experience as he reflects that his wife Kristen offered 'total acceptance of what I was trying to achieve' and that she would 'really counsel patience and self-acceptance'. But as we also know, supporters sometimes critique their favourite players when they feel performance is substandard, and this was also true for several of the CEOs. Mike's

wife Kirsten pointed out to him that he could be 'a real dickhead'. Dennis' wife Heather was not shy in reinforcing the data he received in his first Leadership/Impact measure. In fact, her only question was whether his mild 'blue' ratings were overstated. Jim talks about the feedback from his kids being 'a real turning point' as they helped him realise he was using a 'very authoritarian parenting style' at home. My observation is that both modes of support were beneficial in reinforcing the leadership journeys of the CEOs.

Based on my learnings from these seven CEOs, I now underpin all coaching relationships with two principles. Firstly, I encourage participation from all of the three stakeholder groups in the respective leader's journey. Secondly, I encourage all of those stakeholders to identify the mutually beneficial outcomes which promote the trusting environment that I have found to be so critical for the giving and receiving of direct coaching.

4.6. MASK

Masks have been prevalent in many cultures since the Stone Age and have been used in a variety of ways. They have been worn by actors in a performance, used for religious ceremonies, as a disguise, or for protection in battle or sport. In a theatrical context masks are sometimes used to impress the audience through spectacle, to symbolise membership of a group or tradition, to conceal a character's identity, or to allow the actor to adopt a persona. It is the two latter notions of concealment and adopting a persona that enable me to use the metaphor of the 'mask' to explore my data. To do this, I will alternate between one traditional and one more contemporary theatrical application of the mask.

To explore the application of concealment, I use Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical adaptation of Gaston Leroux's 1909 novel *The Phantom of the Opera*. In *The Phantom of the Opera*, the Phantom wears a mask to conceal his physical imperfections. While he presents a perfect, porcelain face to his audience, there is a certain irony present. The Phantom knows he is wearing a mask, the audience know he is wearing a mask, and the Phantom knows that they know. But the Phantom is happier to present a facade than reveal the man behind the mask.

To explore the application of adopting a persona, I use Chuck Russell's 1994 film *The Mask* starring Jim Carey. In *The Mask*, Jim Carey's character Stanley Ipkiss is a shy young man who works in a bank until he discovers a mask by the sea. This mask channels the Norse God of tricks and deception, Loki. When Stanley brings the mask near his head, it integrates with his face and transforms his persona into a confident, aggressive and outgoing green-faced 'superhero'. In this state, Stanley becomes the man he thinks he needs to be to succeed in life. In contrast to the Phantom, people perceive Stanley as the mask rather than someone hiding behind a mask.

In the first instance, my adoption of the mask metaphor was inspired by Mike in the first round of interviews when he told me that at the start of his journey he felt like an 'imposter'. As I reviewed all of the transcripts for the first round of interviews, the concepts of authenticity, values and congruence emerged for me very strongly. That is, the notion that the CEOs became more genuine in how they engaged with others, more comfortable in their own skin, and more aligned with their deeply held values and beliefs over the course of their journeys. In line with my interpretive analysis, the Leximancer data also threw-up the concept of values, as well as what appeared to be another related concept; real. Knowing that the authenticity literature is expansive, I became curious to explore in greater depth how these concepts played out specifically in each CEO's journey. In particular, I wanted to know whether the CEOs were consciously concealing parts of themselves behind a facade, or whether they were enacting certain roles in their professional lives which created some type of inner conflict. Secondly, in the event that I found the CEOs were masking parts of themselves; did they take the mask off, how and when did they take it off, and in light of the research question, how did this help the CEOs to transform their Leadership/Impact?

Following the second round of interviews, it became evident that each CEO was masking at some point in his leadership journey. It also became evident that there were two distinct groups among the CEOs; hence the two chosen applications of the mask metaphor. I use the Phantom application of the metaphor to describe how four of the CEOs in the study sought to conceal perceived imperfections from their stakeholders; namely Mike, Tim, Alan and Clynton. I will devote a disproportionate degree of focus to Mike because it was his very humble and honest reflections in the first round of interviews that inspired this metaphor, before moving onto the remaining CEOs.

Mike knew he was ill equipped to cope with his promotion to such a big job but tried to project confidence to the organisation even though he felt like 'somewhat of an imposter'. In an effort to conceal his insecurities, Mike tried on the mask of the 'tough guy' in an attempt to be seen as an effective leader.

> I thought, 'ok, I will be the tough guy'. It is working for my boss; he is scaring the hell out of me.

When that didn't work, Mike tried another approach.

> So I said, 'ok, I will be the nice guy. Thank you for saying thank you. Oh, what a wonderful idea that is.' And that wasn't working either. I think I was guessing and making it up as I went along. I was a bit of a fake.

Just like the Phantom, Mike's audience knew that he was wearing a mask, as his direct report Grant recalls below.

> He would really flip-flop between being aggressive and passive. We weren't quite sure which Mike Shove was going to turn up. We weren't sure whether he was going to be the aggressive guy who tries to control everything myopically, or whether he would be the very passive quiet guy in the corner who provided no leadership and no direction.

Again, just like the Phantom, Mike knew that his audience knew that he was wearing a mask.

> During those early months, it was difficult for the team because they had to second guess what I was guessing. So everyone was on tenterhooks as to what Shove was going to show up today, and I hadn't decided myself until I got in the room!

In spite of this silent consensus on Mike's leadership, neither he nor his direct reports were prepared to address this issue. In fact, part of Mike's impact at this time was to discourage anyone from talking about his mask.

Like Mike, Tim was also harbouring some insecurity about stepping into an MD role, especially in light of his lack of tertiary education and leadership experience. Tim's mask was to project the confident swagger of a polished advertising executive that was in line with his self-image of a 'golden boy'. As Tim struggled to cope within a very volatile environment, his golden boy image started to unravel and he experienced a 'crisis of self-doubt' and 'internal turmoil'.

Alan was masking a need to prove himself which he traced back to his relationship with his father where he never felt that he was good enough. This manifested itself in Alan going to great lengths to be liked by everyone. For example, with his superiors he would initially take calls at all hours of the night to keep

them happy. With his front-line staff in Melbourne, he tried to win them over by taking them to rugby games and being one of the boys. Alan was also initially masking the parts of himself that he so vocally attacked in his superiors. Alan's need for approval, combined with his crusade against head office, made for a volatile cocktail in the early parts of his leadership journey for him, his staff, his superiors and me.

Clynton was 'Mr Nivea' on the outside; projecting an exterior of perfection while he was privately 'exhausted' inside by the effort required to maintain this facade. Unlike Mike, Tim and Alan where the wearing of a mask was more visible to others, Clynton's staff bought into the notion that he had all the answers, and as a result became very passive and Dependant.

The Phantom of the Opera metaphor is less helpful in the case of Jim, Paul and Dennis because they were not consciously concealing parts of themselves through a facade. In *The Mask*, when Stanley Ipkiss puts on his mask he actually becomes The Mask; people don't see a man concealed behind a mask, they see and experience the character know as The Mask. In a similar manner, Jim, Paul and Dennis were not hiding behind a mask; they were enacting a certain persona at work in an effort to be successful. I use *The Mask* application of the metaphor to explore their journeys, and start with Jim in some detail to illustrate this version of the metaphor thoroughly.

Jim joined the Victorian public sector straight out of university and realised very quickly what he needed to 'be' in order to get ahead in that organisation.

> I was trained and bred in the Victorian public service. We were the SAS of the public sector. We were one frame managers; command and control. Deliver the outcomes, or else get out of the way. It didn't matter who got in the way, you just got rid of them. I did very well under that structure.

While this 'SAS' persona he had adopted served him very well in the culture of the Victorian public sector, his extremely aggressive behaviour wasn't appreciated in other environments. Jim's long-term colleague Mel recalled what happened when Jim adopted the same persona in the Queensland public service.

> ...in Victoria, where he had to fight and battle his way to get to the top...he'd been very successful. He tried that when he came to Queensland and it didn't work so well.

Like Jim Carey's character in The Mask, Jim steps on people's toes, makes enemies and jeopardises important relationships including those at home. Jim recalled what happened when his very authoritarian style bumped up against his very bright children as they entered their teenage years.

> My family has been important, because they know all the buttons to press...like when my daughter who is very bright does something that you disapprove of, her reaction to me is 'you elected to be a parent, I didn't'. Very powerful! It teaches in many ways… They helped me realise that I was using a very authoritarian parental style.

Just as Stanley Ipkiss eventually decides that his mask is not all it's cracked up to be, so too does Jim decide that his authoritarian persona is at odds with his spirituality and his deeply held values as a leader and a parent.

Paul adopted his tough and 'dictatorial' persona because it worked with his six foot eight frame on the rugby field, and the financial turn-arounds that he had engineered before becoming Getronics MD. His intention was to muscle Getronics out of its dire situation and he was initially incredulous that his approach was met with resistance by the people he was leading. As Paul explored this resistance, he came to understand that his dictatorial persona was at odds with his values of 'teamwork' and 'integrity', as well as his desire to emulate his father's contribution to society which was recognised with an Order of Australia.

The persona that Dennis adopted was that of a supreme intellect. This persona was founded on his reputation as one of Australia's best actuaries and also on his training as a consultant. Dennis boasted that he would 'give you the answer...before you even finished the question'. The impact of Dennis' persona on his team was to encourage the 'intellectual equivalent of eye gauging in a rugby scrum'. This impact conflicted with Dennis' desire to leave a legacy of a growing, thriving business that he would handover to one of his team members when he retired.

While I have explored two applications of the mask metaphor, the common thread between both is that the wearing of a mask created both poor outcomes in the CEOs' professional and private lives, and inner conflict with the CEOs' values and aspirations. The burden of the mask becomes apparent in both *The Phantom of the Opera* and *The Mask*, though only one story has a happy ending. The Phantom wears his mask until the very end, eventually drowning in melancholy. In contrast, once Stanley Ipkiss comes to the conclusion that his mask carries a heavy burden, he goes to great lengths to rid himself of it. As Stanley connects with the best parts of himself that were previously hidden, he gets the girl of his dreams.

All seven CEOs reached a point where they wanted to 'de-mask'; either the mask wasn't delivering the acclaim they were seeking anymore, or it became more effort to uphold than it was worth. In the narratives, it is evident that there were several ways this process of de-masking played out.

Four of the CEOs experienced very direct confrontations that helped to trigger their process of de-masking. For Alan this confrontation occurred in a public forum among his peers. When Alan received his Leadership/Impact data, he found that his *ideal* impact contained many of the ideas that he deplored in his superiors. This was particularly confronting because his data represented the anti-thesis of the 'religion' that he had been evangelising to anyone who would listen. Alan was embarrassed and 'appalled' by his *ideal* impact and renounced it immediately as the brainwashing he experienced during 'eight years in headquarters'.

Similarly, Paul is confronted in a public forum of his peers as he tried to justify his Leadership/Impact data such that he had 'no place to hide'. Paul doesn't let go of the mask right way for two reasons; he believes that his colleagues do not understand him, and he feels that he needs his 'authoritarian' approach to turn the company around. By the end of the session, through the coercion of his more Constructive peers, he came to see the impact of his authoritarian mask on others but was conflicted about removing it. It was

only after he was on the receiving end of someone else wearing an authoritarian mask in another public forum, namely his global CEO Klaas, that he decided he 'didn't like how it felt. Not one bit'.

Like Paul; Mike and Tim did not drop the mask completely when they were confronted with their Leadership/Impact data in a group forum. Though they both put on a brave face, dutifully showed their data first and humbly asked for feedback, Mike left the forum secretly wanting to 'fire the bastards' who had painted a 'horror story' in his data, and Tim was still trying to reconcile the data with his self-image as a 'people-person'. Mike dropped his mask in our one-on-one meeting following his Leadership/Impact debrief when I looked him in the eye and told him I wasn't buying the 'tough-guy' image that he was trying to portray. It was a similar meeting where Tim accepted that his impact was a result of his behaviour and not the result of victimisation of his superiors. It was at that moment that Tim dropped the mask of 'the golden boy'.

Jim's authoritarian mask was fastened on very tight by 15 years in the Victorian public sector. It took several different influences to chip away at this mask over two decades before Jim was able to throw it away. His 'benching' in 1993 served to loosen the mask as he underwent a period of serious reflection which encouraged him to explore additional 'frames' of leadership beyond his authoritarian frame of 'command and control'. The experiential leadership development program (ELDP) he undertook in the late 1990s loosened it further by opening him up to the non-rational side of leadership. As previously mentioned, his teenage children chipped away by rejecting his authoritarian parenting. Meg Wheatley encouraged Jim to drop the mask by exploring the purpose and meaning of his work, as did his spiritual practice. I think I was able to draw these influences together by pointing out the incongruence between his new found sense of purpose and his authoritarian mask.

The de-masking of Clynton was not a dramatic event. He knew he couldn't hold his mask up much longer because he was 'exhausted', and was actively looking for an alternative to the tiresome mask of 'perfection'. He accepted his Leadership/Impact feedback from his executive team without drama and resolved to drop the mask right away. Ironically, Clynton's de-masking was more dramatic for his team as they were forced to confront the idea that they were not acting like leaders, and their boss had now confessed that he did not have all the answers.

Dennis had dropped his mask of the 'supreme intellect' before he received his Leadership/Impact data. After six months working with Dennis and his executive team on the strategy agenda, he was in enough pain, and we had earned enough trust, to help Dennis see the dysfunction and dependency that he was perpetuating in his executive team. Dennis' readiness to explore other approaches was fuelled by positive and negative role models. He admired some of his constructive senior colleagues in the Promina Group environment, and he was chastened by his childhood learning that 'if you don't control your own behaviours you can do some really stupid things' in reference to his father's mistakes.

While each CEO's experience of 'taking off the mask' was different, the narratives suggest that there were some common enablers. The pain being experienced by several of the CEOs increased their readiness to

drop the mask. There were several instances where the CEOs endured pressure to accept their failings from subordinates in a group forum. These forums were typically orchestrated by me or my colleagues to create an environment where the CEOs found it very difficult to dismiss critical feedback for two reasons; they received similar feedback from multiple people, and perhaps somewhat ironically, they were being held accountable to a leadership agenda of their own making. Renowned organisational development scholar Edgar Schein refers to this tactic as 'coercive persuasion' (1961). Schein also speaks to the idea of using 'grain against the grain' in order to induce anxiety or guilt that encourages change. At some point in their journey, each of the CEO's realised that there was incongruence between the mask they were wearing and their deeply held values or aspirations. In many cases, it was me pointing out this incongruence in my role as the CEOs' coach.

Schein notes that there must be perceived 'psychological safety' for a person to make change without a loss of identity or integrity (1997). This psychological safety occurred for each of the CEOs in different ways. As is evidenced in the narratives, Tim, Mike and Alan initially borrowed heavily from my values and beliefs to fill the void that appeared when they took off their masks. Dennis initially experienced some anxiety as he tried to move from his 'concrete' world to the one which was more 'abstract' until he repositioned his Leadership/Impact journey in his mind as an intellectual challenge to be solved over time. Jim also relied on his intellect to find safety. In his case, this was achieved by exploring many theoretical frameworks and models such as the Myers Briggs MBTI, the Johari Window, the Strength Finder, and of course his own Three Frames model. For Clynton and Paul, they achieved a feeling of comfort and safety by meticulously following the process that my colleagues and I laid out for them.

Each of these steps represented a pathway to crafting a leadership identity which was more congruent with their aspirations and deeply held values; a cohesive identity that served them in their professional and personal life. With each CEO, I was very conscious to help reconstruct his leadership identity very quickly once his mask came down. This entailed exploring each CEO's aspirations, values, strengths and the important roles they played in their professional and personal life. In effect, I was trying to help build each CEO's leadership identity around aspects of themselves that were already aligned to the tenants of Constructive leadership.

Mike was able to move on from his 'tough guy' mask when we connected to the more humanistic side of himself that he displayed naturally with his family, and with his self effacing sense of humour. Tim moved beyond mimicking as he internalised the 'blueprint' we constructed for 'a big and authentic life'. This blueprint encouraged a very holistic transformation in Tim covering mind, body and spirit. We also tapped into his voracious appetite for learning and he consumed every resource I threw at him. Like Tim, Jim crafted a more purpose-driven leadership identity based on his spiritual practice and the influence of Meg Wheatley.

Alan moved beyond his need for approval when we brought a sense of priority to his life beginning with his health and family. This encouraged Alan to create boundaries with headquarters that in turn reduced his need for their approval. For Dennis and Paul, connecting Constructive leadership with their values gave

them a sense of confidence and provided reinforcement for their journeys. Paul says that his learnings through the process reinforced to him that 'he is on the right page with his values' and this allowed him 'to take his leadership to the next level'. Dennis' colleague Brad says that Dennis 'kept his values of integrity and ethics all the way through' and that one of things that helped Dennis change was 'remaining true to principles'.

In order to explore the impact of the CEOs developing a 'more authentic and congruent self' during their leadership journeys, in the second round of interviews I asked each of the CEOs to react to the famous quote by Mahatma Ghandi below.

> Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony.

Many of the CEOs already knew this quote and all of them felt that it resonated with their journeys of increasing authenticity and congruence. I have chosen four different excerpts from the interviews to explore how the CEOs experienced this idea of congruence, and also how they believe it impacted on those around them. The first passage is from Jim who confirms the positive impact of congruence on his happiness.

> A happy person is an authentic person. And I use happy more in the Grecian sense; that when your intellect, emotions and values are in interdependent harmony then you're authentic. When one of those is not in harmony then you are not being fully authentic or fully congruent.

Paul, one of the most values-driven people I have ever met, contemplates the effort required to maintain one or many facades.

> If you are not being your true self you are really just putting on an act and when you switch off between acts you are continually under pressure trying to decide what facade you have got to show today. If you are not going to be yourself life is going to be a misery.

While Paul focuses on the personal misery that ensues from upholding a facade, Mike describes the impact of maintaining a facade on others.

> I think it makes an enormous difference if you are not an impostor, if you genuinely believe it, if you talk about the journey, the vision, the direction you are taking the organisation with real passion. You can't fake this stuff; people see it, we hire bright, intelligent people and you can't bullshit them.

As per Mike's narrative, his flip-flopping between the 'tough guy' and the 'nice guy' was evident to others. Rather than encourage confidence, Mike encouraged doubt and anxiety in his team. Since everyone knew that Mike was wearing a mask, he encouraged his team to look for alternative meanings in what he said and how he behaved, rather than accept what was he was saying and doing at face value.

Finally, Tim highlights the very positive impact on others when 'what you think, say and do are in harmony'.

> My personal insight is that the power this congruence unleashes is practically atomic in its scale. You get more done, you build more trust, your interactions with people become more enriching, you feel more fulfilled, and on it goes.

From the narratives, it is evident that each CEO in the study was perceived to become more authentic in his leadership over the course of his journey. Tony, one of Tim's direct reports closed our interview by reflecting that Tim 'has his issues like all of us, but he is genuine in his'. Grant says that as Mike 'grew in confidence, he opened himself even further, exposing his personal side to us, which was pretty much an unknown in the early days'. Geoff says that 'the person you experience now when you deal with Alan is somebody who's infinitely more relaxed and at ease...he's much more in balance with his personal life, and he's probably more Self-Actualised...he's pursuing what he wants to be pursuing - so a real sense of satisfaction there. In summary, he is a very different person today'. The most common feedback I have received from colleagues of these CEOs over the years is similar to Geoff's above; that the CEO is a very different person today. My usual response is that the CEO in question is not a different person, just more of the best parts of himself.

The word 'movie' is a derivative of the term 'moving picture' and is used interchangeably with the words 'motion picture', 'cinema' and 'film'. Louis and Auguste Lumiere are credited with screening the first movie in 1895; a 20 minute piece titled *Workers Leaving the Lumiere Factory.* The first full length movie is thought to be the *Great Train Robbery* which was screened in 1903. Movies have come a long way since these humble beginnings; from Hollywood to Bollywood the movie industry is now a multi-billion dollar enterprise. Supporting this industry are many sub-industries including writing, casting, staging, producing, acting, editing and directing. The three facets of the movie metaphor that I will use to explore my data are the notions of 'acting' in a repetitive movie, viewing one's movie footage in the 'editing suite' and finally, 'directing' one's own movie in accordance with one's leadership vision. I have used the image of the 'clapper board' above to symbolise the various facets of the movie-making process.

My three chosen sub-elements of the movie metaphor have their origins in both the interpretive and Leximancer analyses, which occurred following the first round of interviews. My interpretive analyses revealed the concepts of a growing self *awareness* on the part of the CEOs, and *reflexivity;* that is, the increasing ability of the CEOs to view themselves from another vantage point and modify their behaviour accordingly. The Leximancer analysis threw-up the concepts of *self-awareness, understanding* and *reflection*. When Skye and I pieced together the evidence from our respective analyses, we arrived at a view that the CEOs had become increasingly self-aware of their impact through a range of reflective interventions, and by drawing upon a repertoire of reflective techniques. In the second round of interviews, we endeavoured to understand more about the manner in which the CEOs were able to increase their self-awareness over time, and in particular how their reflective practices enabled them to become more Constructive.

In the second round of interviews, each of the CEOs spoke passionately around these concepts of awareness and reflection. As I listened to their insights, it occurred to me that many of the reflective practices the CEOs spoke about were instigated by my colleagues and I. For this reason, my discussion of this metaphor contains some of my own insights in addition to those of the CEOs. I will now use the three chosen applications of the movie metaphor to bring together our collective insights across both rounds of interviews.

My first application of the metaphor is the concept of 'acting', in particular the notion that at the outset of their journeys, the CEOs were acting in a repetitive movie. Here I draw upon Harold Ramis' 1993 film *Groundhog Day* starring Bill Murray and Andie MacDowell. In 2006, the film was added to the United States National Film Registry as being deemed culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant. Murray plays Phil Connors, a self-absorbed TV weatherman who begrudgingly accepts an assignment to cover the annual Groundhog Day event in Punxsutawney, Pittsburgh. Phil Connors wakes up at exactly 6.00am on

February 2nd everyday to the sound of Sonny and Cher singing *I Got You Babe*. His memories of the 'previous' day remain intact but he somehow remains trapped living the same day over and over again.

Like Phil Connors, in the early part of their leadership journeys, the CEOs were reliving a similar reality day after day. When Alan woke up each day, he prepared himself for battle with the Prussian Empire. When Jim woke up he prepared for battle as an SAS squadron commander. Dennis' day involved adjudicating the eye gauging of his executive team. Clynton's day was tiresome since he had a constant queue of subordinates looking for his direction. Tim woke up trying to rebuild his confidence that had been trampled on the day before. Paul's day involved trying to muscle his way out of a dire financial situation. Mike's day began with the dreaded feeling that no matter which mask he put on, it would inevitably be a struggle.

In *Groundhog Day*, Phil Connors eventually becomes aware that he is somehow trapped in a seemingly endless loop, but he does not realise for some time that it his behaviour and actions keeping him there. It is only when he is compelled by his love interest Rita, played by Andie MacDowell, to reflect on his manipulative behaviour that he finds a way to move beyond 'Groundhog Day'. Similarly, in the early stages of their journeys, the CEOs did not fully comprehend that they were perpetuating their misery through their own behaviour and ultimately their impact on others. And even as they did begin to realise that they were in 'Groundhog Day', they lacked the time and space to reflect on how they could get out of it. From the interview data, it became apparent that it was this very act of disciplined reflection that allowed each CEO to understand how he was perpetuating his repetitive movie, and eventually move beyond it.

It is here that I move to the second application of the movie metaphor; the 'editing suite', to describe the manner in which the CEOs became more aware of their impact. It was Alan who inspired this element of the metaphor when he provided the quote below in the second round of interviews.

> The biggest thing on this journey is, you move from not knowing to knowing about yourself, and it's the realisation on that journey that if you want change, the first things that's got to change is yourself. You've got to have a damn hard look at yourself. Standing outside of yourself and looking back yourself as though you are seeing yourself replayed on video is very powerful.

Alan's idea of watching himself 'replayed' on video lends nicely to the notion of the movie editing suite. In an editing suite a team of people that may comprise the director, editors and actors review raw movie footage in order to discern its value to the overall vision for the movie. Following a review of this footage, changes are made in order to align the footage more closely to the vision. As Alan pointed out in his quote above, the ability to review himself through a lens other than his own was powerful in helping him to reflect on how he was working against his vision for Constructive leadership.

As I have already outlined above, the concepts of self-awareness and reflection were prevalent for each of the CEOs right back to the interpretive and Leximancer analyses from the first round of interviews. The prevalence of these concepts in the data is perhaps not a big surprise considering they are notions that are widely associated with change and transformation. In fact, they are almost truisms in the leadership

literature and society in general. For Alan, these notions stretched all the way back to his childhood as he recalled below.

> My mum used to say all the time in her wonderful Manchester slang 'I wish the Lord the gift he gee us, to see ourselves as others see us'. The translation is basically I wish that I had the gift of seeing myself as others saw me. I used to think 'yeah mum, whatever'. Turns out she was spot on!

Despite the pervasiveness of these concepts, as I have outlined above, reflective practices were not something that the CEOs were habitually practicing when they were stuck in 'Groundhog Day' at the outset of their leadership journeys. From the second round of interviews, I came to understand the various reflective practices that brought the CEOs into the editing suite. That is, the practices that allowed the CEOs to enhance their self-awareness, and subsequently modify their impact.

Here I draw upon the seminal work of Donald Schon to explore two types of reflective practices that featured in the data. In his publication titled *The Reflective Practitioner (1983),* Schon distinguished between the notions of reflection *on* action and reflection *in* action. Schon was particularly interested in the latter notion sometimes described as 'thinking on our feet' or 'on the spot reflection', or in slightly more academic terms, attending to our 'theories in use'. In Schon's language, theories in use are predominantly tacit, non-verbal, non-articulated worldviews, values and strategies that shape intentional behaviour and guide action. Our theories in use are often very different from our 'espoused theories', that is, what we say, conceptualise, and verbalize.

For Schon, reflection *in* action is concerned with looking to one's past experiences, connecting with our emotions, and being aware of and challenging our theories in use in real time, in whatever situation is unfolding. It involves modifying and improving our theories-in-use as events require without being restricted by bias, stress or defensiveness.

> [In reflection in action] The practitioner allows himself to experience surprise, puzzlement, or confusion in a situation which he finds uncertain or unique. He reflects on the phenomenon before him, and on the prior understandings which have been implicit in his behaviour. He carries out an experiment which serves to generate both a new understanding of the phenomenon and a change in the situation. (Schon 1983: 68)

By contrast, Schon's notion of reflection *on* action occurs after a given situation has unfolded, whereby the 'practitioner' reflects on an event alone or through conversation with others. These reflections then inform future situations where the practitioner now has expanded choices or theories in use to draw upon.

From the narratives, both types of Schon's reflective practices can be seen to have developed in the CEOs over time such that they were able to break out of 'Groundhog Day'. A large portion of our data however, points to the importance of disciplined reflection *on* action, or in the language of the metaphor, time in the editing suite. By contrast, reflection *in* action seemed to emerge over time with practice and experience.

One of the key mechanisms for helping each of the CEOs to step out of the movie and into the editing suite was through our regular one-one-one coaching interactions. Jim told me that 'you helped double my reflection... understand myself better...[and] unpack some blind spots'. Paul revealed that Leanne and I 'expanded my sphere of reference more so than people inside our organisation who had a much narrower view'. Dennis told me that 'you gave me insights and useful tools. You could nearly say they were small seeds planted, the concept of the acorn'. Alan told me that 'you really gave me an unbiased opinion to help me see the rounded picture'. Tim said that 'you really inserted yourself in my mind.' Mike told me that 'you played an enormous role...you helped me crystallise in my mind...[what] I aspired to or had but wasn't articulating well'. Finally, Clynton said that 'with you and Leanne as coaches, I was always engaged and curious. Always reflective also...I was actually trying to affect change and learn from you'.

I have previously spoken about the nature of my one-one-ones with the CEOs with respect to direct coaching, but I feel it is important here to provide some more detail of the reflective practices I encouraged in these one-on-ones. While the CEOs talked about the importance of our one-on-ones for reflective practices, I employed different approaches based on the respective CEO's experiences, preferences and also depending on 'the movie' he was in. The approach I used with Alan is what I would term 'reactive reflection'. Basically, we would meet every two to four weeks and I would probe Alan on the previous period with questions like 'what have you done that has worked well/ not so well, what are your insights, and what will you do differently next time as a result?' The fairly spontaneous nature of the dialogue that emerged in these interactions was in part due to the chaos of Alan's movie in the early days, and in part due to the comparatively primitive state of my coaching resources and practices at the outset of my engagement with Alan.

With Clynton and Paul, Leanne and I used a far more proactive and structured approach centring around a Leadership/Impact action planning template. The template structured reflection around the strategies the CEOs had chosen to focus on, how they had used those strategies in the previous weeks, the results they had achieved, and the learnings they could take forward. This approach played to both Clynton and Paul's preference for simplicity and their pragmatic, action-oriented learning styles. The formality of the template also enabled Leanne and I to work together systematically on both Clynton and Paul's journeys because all parties were working from the 'same page'.

Mike and Tim's reflective practices were equally structured but went beyond Leadership/Impact action plans. As evidenced in their narratives, our reflection process revolved around a far more expansive and holistic exploration of the important roles and goals across all dimensions of their lives. Mike encouraged me down this path because his reflections on a very happy personal life contrasted very starkly with the state of his professional life in the early days of his journey. Tim and I went down this path because he wanted a holistic transformation in both the professional and personal realm.

For Jim and Dennis, we adopted more fluid and emergent reflective practices that resembled my early approach with Alan, but for very different reasons. By the time Jim and I got into a regular coaching relationship, he was already a very experienced leader and some way down his journey. He also had a

substantial interest in personal reflection driven by his spiritual practice and relationship with Meg Wheatley. Jim's sophistication in this area allowed us to explore his reflections through a dynamic interchange of insights between he and I. Dennis and I engaged in a similarly dynamic process, and whilst he did not have Jim's reflective sophistication, he grasped concepts and insights at phenomenal speed courtesy of his 'big brain'. As a consequence, Dennis was able to drive our conversations toward the important issues in his environment and became very astute at solving his own issues.

In addition to my scheduled one-on-ones with the CEOs, I had one-on-one conversations at the close of any team interaction that I was involved in. These private conversations between the respective CEO and I occurred immediately following an event with the idea being that 'movies' are best discussed and debated while they are still fresh in the mind. I would ask the respective CEO to critique the 'movie' that had just taken place through a fairly standard series of questions including; 'how effective was the session?' 'How effective was your impact?' 'What did you do well?' And 'what would you do differently next time?' Once the CEO had given me his answers, I would provide my own reflection on the same questions. The idea behind this process was to arrive at a shared picture of two or three simple things that would allow the CEO to move forward positively. Over time, the more we practiced this reflective process, the more they became very proficient at seeing the movie from multiple vantage points.

Beyond my one-on-one interactions with the CEOs in the 'editing suite', there were times when my colleagues and I brought the CEO's entire executive team into the suite together as a group. As per the narratives, each of the CEO's experienced their leadership journey within the context of their executive team's leadership journey. Practically speaking, this meant that the CEOs were part of a formal group reflective process at least quarterly for the duration of their journey, and sometimes as often as monthly. These sessions involved each participant reflecting on their progress to date against their leadership action plans, preparing a formal update for presentation to the group, and receiving peer feedback and reflection on their progress.

While it is evident from the narratives that each of the CEO's benefitted from the feedback that ensued in these discussions, there were some techniques employed systematically by my colleagues and I to encourage constructive participation in team workshops. These processes were not always top of mind for the CEOs but I feel they are of value for a more comprehensive understanding of what happened in the 'editing suite'. Whether our interventions were focused on Leadership/Impact content, or a broader agenda such as strategy or scorecard, the first 30 minutes of any team workshop would always be devoted to setting up an environment conducive to constructive dialogue. Typical questions and exercises included asking team members to describe their desired outcomes, to agree on a set of behavioural standards that would enable the desired outcomes, and to volunteer which standards they would personally be focused on during the session. We would then capture this content on flip charts, position them within easy eyesight of the group, and ask whether they were happy for my colleagues and I to hold them accountable to their outcomes and standards. For the most part, these reflective practices encouraged the constructive participation we were aiming for. On the odd occasion when they did not, it

would provide an opportunity for the CEOs to demonstrate how serious they were about the leadership agenda. I have outlined below one particularly memorable example from Paul's narrative.

> Jack had done no work on his leadership action plan; because he was 'too busy' and 'naturally blue anyway'. In my mind this was not acceptable and I couldn't help myself. I said 'well Jack, frankly I don't accept that for a minute. I'm busy but I find time, and next time you present you need to fill in that space and you better have a credible story'. And Jack said 'I get the message'.

I like this passage from Paul's narrative for two reasons. Firstly, it exemplifies how seriously the CEOs took the formal group reflection processes. Secondly, the aftermath of this incident, where Paul sought out his colleague Ivan for a reflective conversation, demonstrates how Paul's reflective practices went beyond our formally organised interventions.

> Paul   I'd be interested in your feedback about how I handled that.
>
> Ivan   I'll be interested in your own evaluation.
>
> Paul   I fucked it up didn't I?
>
> Ivan   I know why you said it, it was pretty harsh, but frankly it got a very important standard established and a very important message across. So yes you were unusually harsh, and Jack probably crapped in his underpants, but he'll change, and everybody in that room got that message. So yes you need to think about, if somebody disappoints you then how do you express yourself constructively, but by and large I'm glad you expressed yourself.

From the narratives, it appears that the CEOs increasingly took themselves into the 'editing suite' without my involvement. This represents quite a contrast to the start of their journeys when they lacked the time or mechanisms to spend time on something that they intuitively knew was important. Dennis and Jim in particular came to value this process of reflection very highly based on their level of sophistication and the outcomes they were achieving. To capture this sentiment I include a passage from both below, beginning with Dennis.

> As soon as you start understanding what increasing self-awareness is achieving, you see how you can actually change your outcomes just by reflecting. You become more conscious so you actually reflect more often, and you become far more aware about the impact you are having. It is like a spinning wheel, it spins faster and faster.

Dennis speaks to how an enhanced level of consciousness accelerated both his propensity for reflection and his outcomes simultaneously. In a slightly different take below, Jim speaks to how reflective practices became his key mechanism for transformation and innovation. This quote derives from a speaking engagement Jim and I completed together for the CEO Institute in November 2009.

> I think reflexivity and awareness are really the keys to enhanced change and transformation and also to tapping into renewed energy and insight. And the ability to innovate - the ability to see ideas and how to apply them, and the ability to see opportunities where previously you didn't see them.

As the CEOs reflective practices were honed into a habit by their many visits to the 'editing suite', they became more and more proficient at 'directing' their own movies toward their desired outcomes. The notion of directing is my third and final application of the movie metaphor. The process of directing

involves setting and carrying out the overall vision for the movie. This includes setting the tone of the movie and planning the audience's cinematic experience. In the narratives, several of the CEOs talk about how they reflected on the impact they wanted to have on their audience before taking action. In Dennis' narrative, his thoughtful preparation for his address to his top 80 leaders immediately following the announcement of the Suncorp takeover of the Promina Group is a case in point.

> I wrote some notes myself. Then I made them shorter and shorter, into sort of point form. Then, I put them away. Not because I remembered everything, but because I knew the impact that I wanted to have. I wanted them to be calm, thoughtful, and focused on our people.

Similarly, Clynton began to plan his impact very thoughtfully using reflective techniques that we had honed over time.

> Those prescriptive tools that you guys gave me, in regards to preparation for an interaction, forced me to bend back and say 'ok, this would have been my normal language, now what I am going to do is I am actually going to construct my language differently to get the outcome'.

Eventually, as Clynton's repertoire of 'tools' expanded, he became adept at what Schon refers to as reflection *in* action; that is, thinking on his feet and modifying his behaviour in the moment.

> I realised half way in to the session that I was actually facilitating competitive behaviour among two of my direct reports. The old me would have been comfortable believing that I was actually driving them for a better outcome, rather than actually acknowledging that what I was actually doing was not only damaging their relationship, but potentially driving that through the organisation. While it was not ideal, I caught myself and corrected the behaviour. Both of them were quite amazed that I did that and it became a powerful learning for me and the whole team.

In addition to Clynton's ever increasing repertoire of leadership tools, several techniques may be seen to have assisted Clynton in this moment. In his narrative, Clynton speaks about the use of silence as a key strategy that enabled him to become more mindful of his impact, and create space for others to fill. Below, in another example of reflection *in* action, he also speaks about becoming more mindful of his body language.

> I...realised my non verbal cues had been letting me down. I remember sitting in a meeting watching people watch me and they were just looking for clues.

Returning to the movie metaphor, it would appear that Clynton's techniques were enabling him to 'slow down his movie', creating the time and space to choose a better response, mid-action. In addition to Clynton, there is evidence in other narratives whereby the CEOs developed techniques that enabled them to slow down their 'movie'. Like Clynton, Dennis used silence and Socratic questioning to control his natural urge to 'provide the answer' and make space for the contribution of others in his team. In a slightly different fashion, both Jim and Tim benefitted from a calmer disposition gained through their meditation and spiritual practice, which in turn enabled them to navigate mindfully through challenging situations.

As the CEOs began to slow their 'movies', it would appear that they were better able to draw upon their past learnings and their ever expanding repertoire of tools and strategies in order to direct a movie in line

with their leadership vision. Importantly, the ability to slow down and experiment with a different behaviour in real time does not necessarily guarantee a successful outcome. Rather, it would appear to help the CEO to make a more conscious and informed choice in a given moment that draws from past experience, and their expanding repertoire of leadership tools and strategies.

As I seek to close off my discussion of the movie metaphor, for now at least, I am struck by two additional applications of the metaphor that may invite further exploration at a later date. My first insight revolves around the notion that the CEOs did not only reflect upon own 'movies', but they also had various opportunities to reflect upon the movies of fellow CEOs who were on similar journeys. Interestingly, this included the CEOs in this study reflecting on each others' stories in various forums including our quarterly CEO think tanks, the annual Human Synergistics Conference, and various other external CEO forums. My second insight concerns the notion that this research process required the CEOs to embark on a process of reflection on a grand scale; in some ways it was like we were co-creating a biographical documentary of each of their journeys. As can be seen in the CEO reactions to their narratives at the end of each story, their very involvement in this study itself has encouraged self-reflection on a grand scale.

4.8. RUSSIAN DOLLS

Russian dolls are made of wood, similarly shaped, and typically contain three to eight dolls sitting neatly inside one another. When you pull the doll apart, another one, slightly smaller, sits inside. According to the Encyclopaedia of Russian History (ed. Millar, 2003) it is believed that the first doll dates from 1890, and is said to have been inspired by a doll of the Japanese artist Fukuruma. The first Russian one was said to be carved by Vasiliy Zvezdochkin and painted by Sergei Maliutin.

Each doll in a set typically resembles the others but they are not necessarily identical. While the traditional image of the Russian doll is the Russian peasant woman, some of the most prized collectibles do not have faces at all. Rather, they tell a story through different painted images on each doll in the set. Russian dolls can also used metaphorically, as a design paradigm known as the 'Matryoshka principle' or 'nested doll principle'. This principle denotes a relationship of object within object, similar to the onion metaphor where one layer is peeled back to reveal another smaller layer.

My use of the Russian dolls can be traced back to two methodological tensions which emerged in the first round of interviews. The first tension emanated from an inability on the part of the CEOs to speak about their leadership journeys as distinct from the journeys of their teams and organisations. The second tension stemmed from what I considered to be a lack of colour and depth in the CEO's recollections of their leadership journeys. I will now use the Matryoshka principle of object within object to explore the first tension.

The word 'journey' came up so many times in the first round of interviews that it created challenges for the Leximancer software used in this study; it was the most 'frequently coded concept' that appeared in the automatic content analysis. In contrast, however, it did not appear among the thirteen concepts I arrived at in my interpretive analysis of the transcripts. Consequently, Skye and I had a dialogue about the merits and limitations of our respective analyses.

I was concerned that I had unduly influenced the degree to which the CEOs had spoken about 'journey', something that Leximancer could not recognise. Generally speaking, I use the word 'journey' frequently in my engagements with CEOs. In some cases, this is a purposeful attempt to influence leaders' expectations about the time, effort and energy that may be required to address their change agenda. More often, however, I think it's just a well worn habit which carried over into my interaction with the CEOs in the context of this research study.

Notwithstanding my influence on the CEOs with this concept, the origins of journey can be traced a little further back to Greek mythology with legendary stories like Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. In fact, one could argue that the metaphor of journey, and some of its defining components like 'departure point', 'pathway', and 'goal', are so embedded in our society that they have almost transitioned from metaphor to everyday speech. For example, words and phrases like 'stay on track', 'move forward', 'change tack',

and 'next steps' all have their origins in the journey metaphor. For all of these reasons, I was sceptical about how significant the concept of journey was for our understanding of leadership transformation.

Skye was less willing to dismiss the concept of journey based on my reasoning alone. The Leximancer analysis allowed us to identify the other words which travelled frequently with the concept of journey; namely 'leadership', 'organisational', 'personal', 'change' and 'team'. As we explored the sections of content underpinning these associations, it became apparent that the CEOs were speaking about several different types of journeys that they were part of. This discovery resonated with the frustration I experienced during the first round of interviews. As I tried to get the CEOs to isolate their 'leadership journey', without exception, each of the CEOs recounted stories of team and organisational activity in answer to the question 'how did *you* make the shift?'

As I delved more deeply into the transcripts from the first round of interviews, I found three of the journeys mentioned above; individual, executive team and organisational mentioned repeatedly. In addition to these three, Clynton spoke about what appeared to be a fourth journey; that of his extended leadership group which comprised the direct reports of his executive team.

The more I came to see how intertwined the various journeys were in the minds of the CEOs, the more I was concerned about how I could possibly isolate the CEOs' individual journeys of transformation; no small dilemma considering the topic of this thesis. In conversation with Richard, this worry turned into a point of interest as we began to consider the possibility that the concept of multiple journeys could be a learning for leadership transformation rather than a methodological hindrance. As a result, we agreed that in the second round of interviews I should probe the CEOs very directly to determine how many journeys they perceived, why they had difficulty isolating their individual leadership journeys, and whether any of this was important for our understanding of leadership transformation.

In the second round of interviews, all seven CEOs reinforced that their own leadership journeys were wrapped up in the journeys of their executive teams and their broader organisations. Clynton speaks to the team journey when he says that 'I'm very proud of the Leadership/Impact I achieved but I find it very hard to separate my leadership journey from that of my team'. Paul speaks to the organisation journey when he says that 'whatever I was doing in terms of improving my Leadership/Impact, the measure of my success was going to be how the company turned out after my improvements'. Mike provides a neat summary of all three journeys in the extended quote below.

> Well the journeys were so intertwined I don't think I could separate them. Once I realised that I needed a team to be successful then we were on that journey together, taking the organisation along that similar path. So I don't think I could be on the journey without having the rest of the team or the organisation with me.

The fourth journey identified by Clynton in the first round of interviews, that of his extended leadership group, was also reinforced by all of the other CEOs bar Tim. There was a practical reason for Tim's exclusion; having moved organisations in the middle of his leadership journey, there was simply not a long enough engagement in either company to get down to this level of the organisation. In retrospect, it is

clear to me why these four 'levels' of journey seemed to be inseparable for the CEOs. Not only did the CEOs experience each of the four journeys as part of our engagement frameworks, there was a reciprocal accountability between these journeys that I have already spoken about at length in the 'snowball' theme. And while these insights were exciting for me, there were still two additional journeys to be uncovered; the first was the up-line environment of the CEOs. In effect, the outermost doll.

The outermost doll was present in each CEO's journey; sometimes as an enabler of their leadership journey, sometimes as a hindrance, and sometime interchanging between both. Mike's up-line environment had the potential to derail his leadership journey if his first memorable encounter with his new boss was anything to go by. Mike managed this risk by leveraging the autonomy afforded to him by the 15,000 kilometres between him and head office. Jim's up-line environment was proactively supportive of his leadership journey, and it needed to be. As a senior public servant in a sitting state government, Jim was subject to enormous scrutiny from the opposition party of the day. Jim's leadership journey was only sustained over time because his Minister was willing and able to defend it in Parliament under attack from the opposition party.

Clynton's global company operated with a very decentralised structure such that he had complete autonomy to advance his leadership journey. Tim's context was particularly unique since his leadership journey spanned different companies. In his first company, Tim's up-line environment was very challenging because of its imminent sale and the associated lack of stability. In his second environment, the up-line environment was so supportive of his leadership journey that his Chairman asked to participate in the process.

Dennis' up-line environment was initially very supportive; both in terms of the decentralised structure he operated within, and the supportive counsel of his Group CEO who encouraged Dennis to develop his leadership. Though his up-line environment became less supportive after the acquisition of his company, Dennis still enjoyed enough autonomy to continue his leadership journey.

Alan's up-line environment looked conducive to his leadership journey at the start given his boss' direction to go down to Australia and 'debuild the Prussian Empire'. Over time, however, Alan came to see that not only was his boss' direction unsupported by the other senior figures in his up-line environment, but they were so antagonistic toward his leadership journey that he eventually had to leave the company.

Paul's up-line environment included a global CEO who liked the metaphor of a baseball bat to describe his approach to leadership, and a regional boss who made a special trip down to Australia from Singapore to try and kill off Paul's leadership journey altogether. After direct intervention with his regional boss, and increasing financial performance which pleased his global boss, Paul's environment ultimately became very supportive of his leadership journey.

As I reflect on the stories above, I have become very mindful that the outermost doll has the capacity to swallow-up all of the other dolls at any given moment. This was not a problem for Clynton and Dennis

because of the space they each enjoyed by way of their very decentralised structures. For the most part, their dolls sat separate to the outermost dolls.

At various times, Jim, Paul, Mike and Alan each had to demonstrate how their journeys aligned with their outermost dolls in order to sustain their leadership agendas. Jim did this by equipping his Minister to defend his leadership agenda. Paul did it by putting me in between him and his regional boss. In both instances, the contracting of values and value had to take place successfully with a new set of stakeholders. In effect, Jim and Paul were ultimately able to show the outermost doll how well their leadership agendas fitted neatly within the broader context.

Mike navigated his up-line environment by keeping a very low profile until he could show tangible results from his leadership agenda. These results ultimately created a 'pull' from his up-line environment such that Mike is now revered as a leadership 'guru' in his company and my organisation has been engaged by Mike's bosses for several years on a similar agenda. In effect, Mike kept his dolls separate to the outermost doll until he was invited in. By contrast, Alan tried to fit the outermost doll into his smaller dolls with the inevitable pain that this metaphor might suggest.

The sixth and final doll we uncovered in the second round of interviews was the very personal journey that sat appeared to sit within each CEO's leadership journey. In the first round of interviews, the CEOs seemed to use the terms of 'leadership' and 'personal' interchangeably when they spoke about their journey. When I probed on this point in the second round of interviews, each of the CEOs articulated distinctions between the two journeys. I have used an extended quote from Tim's narrative below because he provides a compelling example of the interplay between these two dolls.

> At the same time I was going through my leadership journey really developed a deep connection with yoga. And so the meditation, the sort of integration of physical and mental and spiritual health, the way it teaches you around a personal centeredness turned out to be just a massive influence. Losing a lot of weight, getting fit, getting healthy, getting organised. My attempts to master these sorts of things were all part of one journey not separate journeys.

Tim's leadership journey inspired him to make changes in his personal life which, in turn, appeared to positively reinforce his leadership journey. As reflected in the narratives, our early coaching sessions revealed a misalignment between Tim's personal vision for himself and his best imitation of someone 'running around with [his] arse on fire'. As he began to align his physical, mental and spiritual well being to his vision, I observed a positive impact on his leadership journey. His energy increased notably, he became more purposeful and disciplined in his actions, and far more centred and reflective in response to the challenges of his environment.

In Jim's narrative, his leadership journey can be seen as an extension of the spiritual journey he had already embarked upon. Jim found the tenants of Constructive leadership to be very aligned with his spiritual beliefs. As a result, he was able to bring his spirituality to work every day. For Alan, his leadership journey encouraged a more purposeful and balanced personal life such that he got his health in order and stopped prioritising work over his young family. In a similar manner, Dennis leveraged his leadership

journey to improve the quality of his relationships with his family. For Mike, his leadership journey involved overcoming self-doubt and social awkwardness to such a degree that he is in demand as a keynote speaker on three continents. For Paul, his leadership journey only made sense when he could understand it in the context of his deeply held personal values and beliefs. Connecting his leadership journey to rugby didn't hurt either. As Clynton states in his narrative, he drew upon the learnings of his leadership journey to navigate constructively through the breakdown of his marriage. This, in turn, provided him with a level of perspective and resilience which helped him on his leadership journey.

Based on my learnings from the narratives, the leadership doll and the personal doll appear to be mutually reinforcing when they are in alignment. With the CEOs in this study, the personal journey was concealed until they revealed it to me in the course of our conversations about their leadership journeys. In some ways, I feel that the leadership journey provided the legitimacy to connect with the more personal journey.

I find it ironic that my initial desire to isolate the CEOs' leadership journeys has given way to a much stronger desire to explore how the dolls work together and apart. As I reflect on the metaphor, it seems to me that when all of the dolls fit neatly within one another, they have the potential to travel well together. Assuming my observation is sound, then it would stand to reason that whenever one doll tries to pull in a different direction, its proximity to the other dolls ensures that it doesn't get very far.

Having explored the 'object within object' aspect of the Russian doll metaphor, I now wish to explore a second application of this metaphor; its ability to tell a story through imagery painted on the exterior of the dolls. Similarly, the CEOs' ability to describe their leadership journeys was enhanced by the use of imagery, story and metaphor.

My very first CEO interview in this research study was with Tim and it left me with very mixed emotions. I picked Tim to go first because I felt he would be the most animated and colourful in his responses to my questions for a few reasons; his outgoing personality, his creative background, and my recollections of the many colourful incidents in his journey. Suffice it to say that this interview fell well short of my expectations. Tim's answers missed many of the memorable incidents from my recollections. They were also very dry and lacked any of the depth of insight I had experienced with him many times before. It was only when I turned off the tape recorder and expressed my frustrations to Tim that our interview suddenly burst into life. Tim told me that his stiltedness was a result of his struggle with the notion that he had 'transformed'. He said that if leadership transformation was a martial art, that he had only progressed from 'white belt to yellow belt'.

This metaphor spoke so profoundly to me, particularly in contrast to the rest of the Tim's interview, that I made a note to ask him for his metaphor on the record in our second interview, and to ask this question of the other six CEOs at the end of their first interviews. While the remaining six first-round interviews were not as stilted as Tim's, there was still a similar explosion of colour and clarity when they expressed their experiences in a metaphor.

The metaphors that they offered appear, at least on the surface, to be quite different. Each of the metaphors is articulated in full in the narratives so I will only mention the metaphors here in brief. Mike's journey manifests itself as 'the ugly duckling becoming a swan'. Alan talks about moving from 'darkness to light' and Jim speaks of 'pilgrim's progress'. Tim uses the karate metaphor of 'white belt to yellow belt' and more recently to 'green belt'. Paul uses a 'sailing' metaphor, Dennis relates his journey to 'skiing', and Clynton poetically frames his journey as the gradual process of 'leaves changing colour'.

Even though each CEO engaged in a similar framework of tools, milestones and interventions, they all arrived at very different interpretations of their journeys. This is confirmation in my mind of how much transformation is bound by the unique context and experience of the leader. On closer inspection, however, there appear to be two themes in the CEO metaphors which I find complimentary to many of my learnings in the previous elements of this chapter. There are undertones of metamorphosis; that is, a gradual progression from one state to another, over time. There is also a theme of navigating various terrains in pursuit of a destination.

Perhaps the thing that strikes me most about these metaphors is their potential usage by leaders as vehicles for making sense of leadership transformation. This is particularly notable since, by trade, among this group are stereotypically non-creative professionals including accountants, an actuary and a polymer chemist. In fact, seeing how powerfully the CEOs interacted with the vehicle of reinforced the notion that they could be a powerful mechanism to explore my learnings from the narratives in a way that would be likely to resonate with my audience.

In conversation with Richard, and building on my success with the metaphors, we decided to try and enliven the conversation further in the second round of interviews by asking the CEOs to describe their journey with one of six story types - epic, drama, tragedy, comedy, fairytale, and romance.

The CEOs' responses to this question were equally enlightening and entertaining for me. Five of the seven could not fit their journey into one neat description. Alan picked drama and comedy, Tim picked drama and fairytale, Paul picked drama and epic, Clynton picked comedy and drama, and Dennis picked drama and comedy. The two other CEOs were Mike and Jim; Mike picked fairytale and Jim picked epic. In summary, drama was selected five times, comedy three times, epic two times, and fairytale two times.

Just like the metaphor exercise, I found the CEOs' selection of story types representative of their respective journeys and instructive for my understanding of leadership transformation. No one picked the extreme suffering associated with the tragedy story-type, nor did they pick the idealism associated with romance. The predominance of the drama story-type captures for me the human conflict that is scattered throughout all of the narratives. But at the same time, I concur with the three CEOs who picked comedy to represent the moments of humour and lightness which offset all of the drama.

Tim's use of fairytale as his secondary story-type to drama refers to the 'mystical and transformative' nature of his personal journey. Mike's choice of fairytale works for me in synchronicity with his metaphor of 'ugly duckling to swan'; shifting from the 'horror' of his original data to a mirror image of his *ideal*

impact. Paul's use of epic as his secondary story-type to drama speaks to the somewhat 'legendary' turn around in the financial results of his business. Jim's use of the epic story-type speaks to me because of the sheer longevity of his journey, and the fact that his transformation was achieved amidst a 'backdrop of negative energy' which often emanated from his public sector environment.

Finally, it occurs to me that although each of the seven CEOs in this study can rightfully claim 'transformation' status, six of them are still actively 'on the journey'. The only one who has actively retired from the journey is Dennis, and that is because he is retired from professional management; though he does still mentor leaders with his learnings. Each of the other six CEOs are adamant that this is not a journey from A to B and that what they are involved in is a lifelong journey. Alan says that 'you don't suddenly wake up one morning and go 'my God, I have changed!' It is a journey. It doesn't end. You can't suddenly say 'I'm cured'.

4.9. VISUAL SUMMARY OF METAPHOR CHAPTER

As per the introduction to this chapter on metaphors, I have used a visual summary of the seven metaphors to help me communicate my insights to various audiences. That visual summary is included again as Figure 37 below.
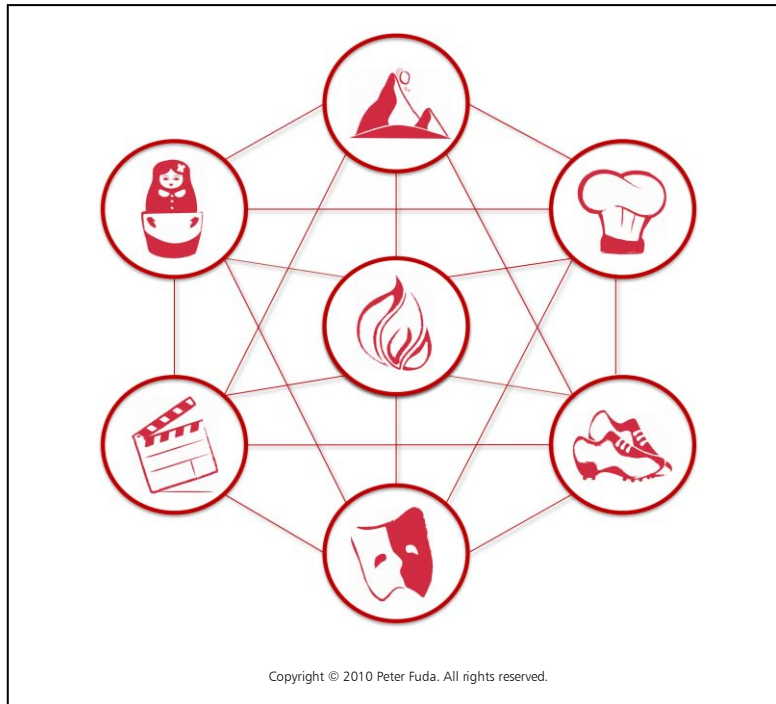
Figure 37: Visual Summary of the Seven Metaphors for Transformation

There are only two simple ideas that I wish to communicate with Figure 37. Firstly, that all of the metaphors have a fluid relationship to one another in the process of leadership transformation. And secondly, that the 'fire', which represents the CEOs' motivations to commence and continue a journey of transformation, provides context, purpose and leverage for all of the other metaphors.

5. CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

> Now this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning (Winston Churchill).

As I draw four years of research to a close, I draw upon the wisdom of Winston Churchill to open and close this short *Conclusion Chapter*. After a brief wrap-up of 'what I have done' in this study, I will then address the more pertinent question of 'where to from here?'

5.1. WHAT HAVE I DONE?

> If the only tool we have is a hammer, every problem looks like a nail (Abraham Maslow).

For me, this thesis is the story of how I have addressed the fairly common challenge of 'leadership transformation, in a somewhat unconventional way. While those in the pure positivist tradition may criticise my work, as Maslow infers above, sometimes new tools are required to solve old problems. As a result, I did not set out to provide a neat and simplistic answer to my research question *what does it take for a traditional manager to transform into a contemporary leader?* Rather, I consciously sought to develop a rich and contextual understanding of leadership transformation by adopting a social constructionist perspective.

This unconventional approach began with identifying seven CEOs who had evidence of a 'transformation' in their leadership, within a broader context of organisational 'success'. Based on my level of intimacy and trust with each CEO, I was able to access very honest insights and reflections on why they embarked upon a journey of transformation, and how they actually made their respective shifts toward Constructive leadership. In collaboration with a powerful 'community of research', including my fellow researchers, my professional colleagues, and the CEOs' colleagues, I constructed seven original and reflective narratives. I then interpreted these narratives through the application of seven metaphors designed to be used by the reader in a generative way. Over the last 12 months, I tested the resonance of my narratives and metaphors with several thousand management practitioners, and their feedback further helped to shape this thesis. Through my community of research, I feel I have orchestrated an upward hermeneutic spiral that enriches our understanding of leadership transformation.

5.2. WHERE TO FROM HERE?

With regards to my management practitioner audience, the first thing to say in answer to this question is that it is not hypothetical; there are already applications of this study going on that are beyond the scope and timeline of my research. Several of the seven CEOs are already using their story to engage with stakeholders who are internal and external to their respective organisations. For example on the 12th October 2010, Mike Shove will be interviewed about his leadership journey live on stage by former Australian rugby captain John Eales at a conference run by the *Australian Financial Review*. Delegates will then discuss their learnings and insights from Mike's journey in breakout sessions.

I will continue to speak about this study to public audiences in the coming months with an emphasis on the seven metaphors. Up to this point, my use of the metaphors has been purposefully narrow in order to

interpret the CEO narratives. In the future, it is my intention that the metaphors, used in a generative fashion, will take on a life of their own with the management practitioner audience beyond my direct involvement.

With the permission of the CEOs in this study, the seven narratives will be published in some form and made accessible for public consumption. The CEO narratives may then be used as a source of self-reflection through Socratic questioning and guided learning. For example, in the various CEO forums where I and some of the CEOs in this study have presented their stories, I have concluded these sessions by asking the audience; what resonated with you, and why? What will you do differently as a result? The narratives could also be used to promote an authentic conversation about leadership that differs from the 'heroic' notions pervasive in contemporary literature.

With regards to my academic audience, the present study answers a call among social constructionists for stories from the field. In particular, my stories of leadership transformation 'launch off' a conceptual foundation offered by Keith Grint's social constructionist view of leadership, Barbara Czarniawska's approach to narrative research, and Karl Weick's sense making stance. There are several authors among my academic audience who have expressed a desire to read this thesis, not the least of which include Grint and Czarniawska themselves, and Meg Wheatley. To say that I am humbled and daunted by this prospect would be an understatement. However, it is my genuine desire that my work becomes a vehicle for dialogue and debate among my academic audience.

Beyond the social constructionists mentioned above, it is also my hope that the narratives and metaphors invite further academic development. For example, in the same way that Gareth Morgan's metaphors for organisations have featured prominently in academic literature, I hope that my seven generative metaphors may provide a foundation for others to build upon.

Having taken the hermeneutic spiral as far as I can, I feel it is now time to stop 'talking' and heed the advice of Winston Churchill.

> Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen (Winston Churchill).

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APPENDICES

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1. APPENDIX A - HUMAN SYNERGISTICS THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

1.1. BEHAVIOUR THEORIES THAT UNDERPIN THE CIRCUMPLEX

Critical to the research design are the quantitative articulation of preferred leadership models, and the measurement of transformation. The Leadership/Impact® (Cooke, 1997) instrument is based on the Human Synergistics International Circumplex™ developed by Dr J. Clayton Lafferty in the 1970s.

The Circumplex represents a synthesis of a collection of seminal contributions on human thinking and behaviour. Theories which inform the 'Task' Vs 'People' dichotomy of the Circumplex include the distinction between concern for people and concern for production (Blake & Mouton, 1964), and the distinction between employee-centred and production-centered strategies (Katz, Maccoby and Morse, 1950). Research which informs the individual Circumplex styles includes those of David C. McClelland, Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, Douglas McGregor, Harry Stack- Sullivan and Karen Horney.

McClelland, whose research is incorporated within the Circumplex styles of Achievement, Affiliative, Dependent and Power, proposed that humans are motivated by 3 needs (McClelland, 1961). The need for Achievement or nAch, the need for Power or nPow, and the need for Affiliation or nAff. Udai Pareek, an Indian Psychologist, who worked with McClelland, added the need for Extension or nExt to the list. McClelland contends that the motive profile of a person can change, both as a function of one's life course as well as formal training. He has demonstrated with abundant evidence that nAch can be increased by formal training and that individuals with a high need for achievement tend to have higher productivity than those without. In this sense he proposed that needs are learned not instinctive.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs forms the basis for the Circumplex style of Self-Actualizing. He contends that, beyond the basic needs of air, water, food, and sex, human beings have five other categories of need: the physiological needs, the needs for safety and security, the needs for love and belonging, the need for esteem, and the need to actualize the self, in that order (Maslow, 1954).

Rogers' theory contends that people are basically good or healthy, or at very least, not bad or ill. In other words, he sees mental health as the normal progression of life, and he sees mental illness, criminality, and other human problems, as distortions of that natural tendency (Rogers, 1963). His theory is built on a single "force of life" he calls the actualizing tendency and his work is incorporated into the Circumplex styles of Humanistic-Encouraging, Approval and Competitive.

McGregor proposed a set of ideas about the practice of management. He defined assumptions that he felt underpinned the practices and stances of managers in relation to employees. The two sets of propositions were dubbed Theory X and Y, and what managers said or exhibited in their behaviour, revealed their theories-in-use (McGregor, 1960). McGregor contends that needs provide the driving force motivating behaviour and general orientation. His ideas are represented in the Humanistic-Encouraging Circumplex style.

Stack-Sullivan, whose research is incorporated into the Conventional, Avoidance and Oppositional Circumplex styles, developed the concept of a "self-system", which is an individual's collection of self-perceptions. The self-system actively protects one from information that would cause one to re-evaluate all pre-existing self-perceptions. It does this through a process of "selective inattention". Part of this process is taking evasive maneuvers that allow one to maintain congruence between one's interpersonal world and one's self-perceptions (Stack-Sullivan, 1953). He saw that individuals have a need to keep their behaviour in line with their self-perception and the perception of others.

Horney broke with Freudian theory by stressing needs over sexual and aggressive drive. She analysed the ways in which an individual moves towards, against, and away from others and the world around him/her. These "flows" are reflected in healthy attitudes of extroverted interest, assertiveness to overcome obstacles, and reflection upon results. Horney theorised that there are 3 basic orientations of how we relate to others: Compliant Orientation - the need for love, approval and affection; Aggressive Orientation - the need for power, strength and to manipulate others; Detached Orientation - the need for freedom, independence and self-reliance (Horney, 1945). Her research is incorporated in the Circumplex styles of Oppositional and Perfectionistic.

The Circumplex assimilates these theories into styles of thinking, behaving and impacting clustered into three general orientations; the Constructive cluster, the Passive-Defensive cluster, and the Aggressive-Defensive cluster. The Constructive cluster reflects a balance of people and task-related concerns and promotes the fulfilment of higher order needs. The four styles which comprise the Constructive cluster are Achievement, Self-Actualising, Humanistic-Encouraging and Affiliative.

The Passive-Defensive cluster represents an unduly strong orientation toward people as opposed to tasks, fuelled by and reinforcing individual insecurity. The four styles which comprise the Passive-Defensive cluster are Approval, Conventional, Dependence and Avoidance. The Aggressive-Defensive cluster emphasises tasks over people and is driven by underlying insecurities. The four styles which comprise the Aggressive-Defensive cluster are Oppositional, Power, Competitive and Perfectionstic.

Definitions of the four Constructive styles, the four Passive-Defensive styles and the four Aggressive Defensive styles are available in Figure 1 below.
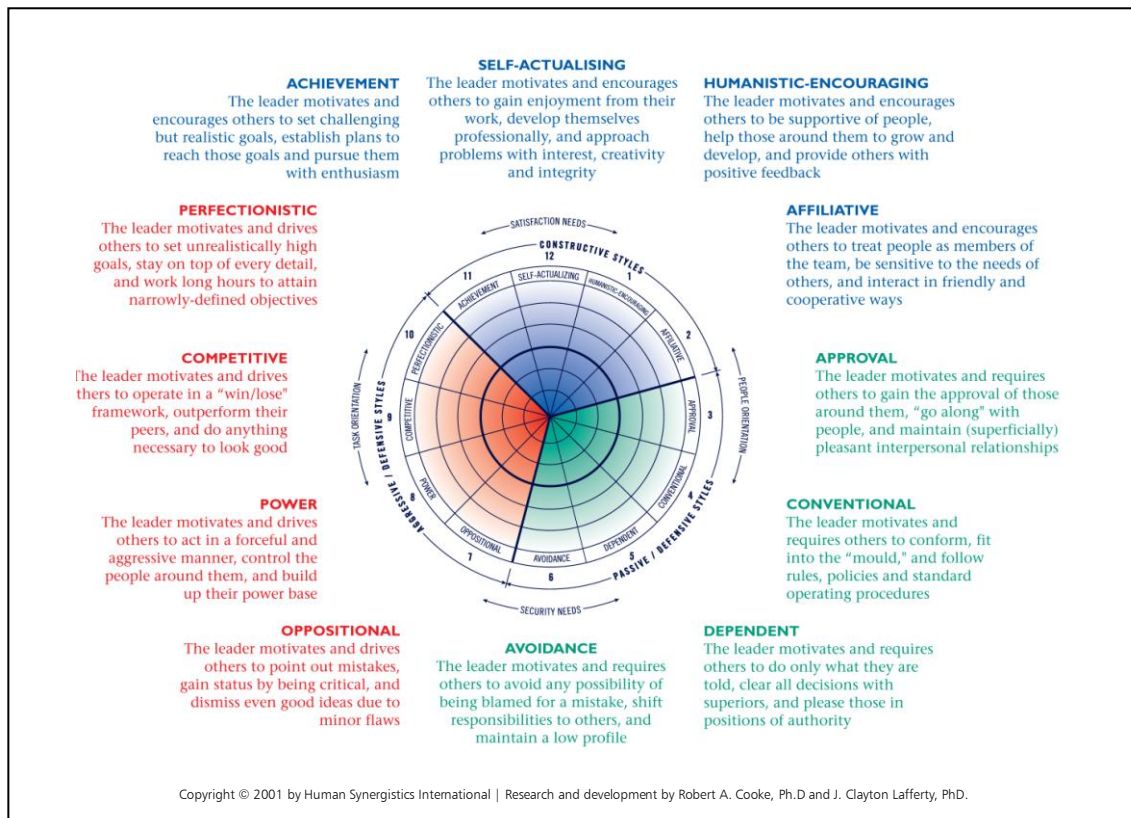
SELF-ACTUALISING
The leader motivates and encourages others to gain enjoyment from their work, develop themselves professionally, and approach problems with interest, creativity and integrity

ACHIEVEMENT
The leader motivates and encourages others to set challenging but realistic goals, establish plans to reach those goals and pursue them with enthusiasm

HUMANISTIC-ENCOURAGING
The leader motivates and encourages others to be supportive of people, help those around them to grow and develop, and provide others with positive feedback

PERFECTIONISTIC
The leader motivates and drives others to set unrealistically high goals, stay on top of every detail, and work long hours to attain narrowly-defined objectives

AFFILIATIVE
The leader motivates and encourages others to treat people as members of the team, be sensitive to the needs of others, and interact in friendly and cooperative ways

COMPETITIVE
The leader motivates and drives thers to operate in a "win/lose" framework, outperform their peers, and do anything necessary to look good

APPROVAL
The leader motivates and requires others to gain the approval of those around them, "go along" with people, and maintain (superficially) pleasant interpersonal relationships

POWER
The leader motivates and drives others to act in a forceful and aggressive manner, control the people around them, and build up their power base

CONVENTIONAL
The leader motivates and requires others to conform, fit into the "mould," and follow rules, policies and standard operating procedures

OPPOSITIONAL
The leader motivates and drives others to point out mistakes, gain status by being critical, and dismiss even good ideas due to minor flaws

AVOIDANCE
The leader motivates and requires others to avoid any possibility of being blamed for a mistake, shift responsibilities to others, and maintain a low profile

DEPENDENT
The leader motivates and requires others to do only what they are told, clear all decisions with superiors, and please those in positions of authority

Figure 1: Leadership/Impact Circumplex Definitions

1.2. THE LEADERSHIP/IMPACT MODEL

The Leadership/Impact instrument is important to this study for two key reasons. Firstly, it will represent a one of the key measures for 'successful' transformation on the part of the CEOs. Secondly, the 'preferred' impact will represent the contemporary leadership aspiration described in the research question.

Figure 2 below depicts the Human Synergistics Leadership/Impact model. Firstly I would like to focus on the centre of the model, denoted as 'Impact on Others'. Research conducted by Human Synergistics has demonstrated that movement toward a Constructive impact should enhance a leader's effectiveness. For example, in a study of over 250 managers at GE, Rob Cooke and Linda Sharkey (2006) noted that "… peak periods [i.e. periods that would indicate enhanced effectiveness] are characterized almost exclusively by a Constructive rather a Defensive impact." The present research would seem to support this notion as I outline in detail in *Section 3.1. Subject Selection Justification*, as the 7 CEOs in the study developed a more Constructive Impact over time, there was evidence of a simultaneous increase in effectiveness in both personal and organisational outcomes.
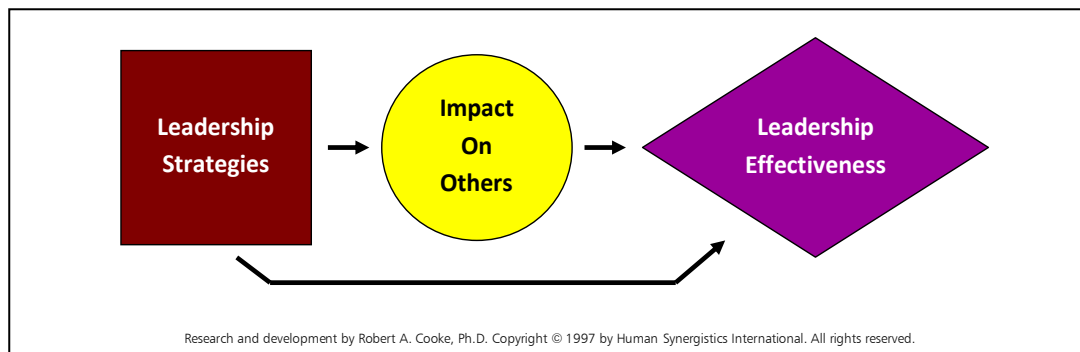
Figure 2: The Leadership/Impact Model

Next, I would like to turn to the 'Leadership Strategies' at the left hand side of The Leadership/Impact model. Figure 3 below provides definitions of 10 Leadership/Impact strategies devised by Human Synergistics, which may be used in a 'Prescriptive' (enabling), or 'Restrictive' (constraining) fashion. Prescriptive use of the strategies is hypothesised to be correlated with a Constructive impact, whereas Restrictive use of the strategies is hypothesised to be correlated with a (Passive or Aggressive) Defensive Leadership/Impact.

In this sense, Leadership Effectiveness is the outcome or dependent variable in the Leadership/Impact model; Prescriptive strategies are causally related, both directly and indirectly (through Impact as an intervening variable) to leadership effectiveness. Szumal, Janet (2002) provides empirical support for these relationships. Importantly, the present research is not looking to validate per se whether Prescriptive use of the 10 Leadership Strategies was a causal factor in each of the 7 CEO's transformation. Rather, the present research is taking an exploratory approach to ascertain the (self-reported) manner in which each CEO sought to transform their impact toward more Constructive leadership.

1.3. THE LEADERSHIP/IMPACT SURVEY PROCESS

The Leadership/Impact assessment uses a 360° survey process to ascertain the statistical impact of the subject on those whom they interact with. To undertake the assessment, the subject completes a 180-question survey on the behaviours that he or she would like to promote and encourage in others; effectively creating an *ideal* leadership profile. The leader also answers questions pertaining to the use of the 10 Leadership/Impact Strategies, which seek to ascertain how frequently the leader is (in their own opinion) using each strategy in a Prescriptive or Restrictive fashion. At the same time as the leader completes his or her own inventory, eight other inventories are distributed to a combination of direct reports, colleagues, and the subject's immediate manager to determine the subject's *actual* leadership profile, including effectiveness, impact and strategies. All of the data is completed confidentially and loaded anonymously into the Human Synergistics International database to produce a comprehensive 75-page report.

1.4. THE LEADERSHIP/IMPACT™ STRATEGIES

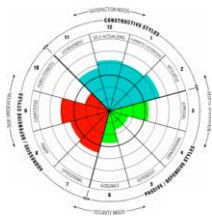|		Prescriptive Examples	Restrictive Examples
ENVISIONING	Refers to the way in which a leader identifies, communicates & shares his or her goals & direction for promoting organizational effectiveness	Involves **Defining** a desired state of future affairs & sharing this vision with others.	Involves **Delimiting,** such focusing on what you don't want in terms of undesirable behaviours and ways of doing business.
ROLE MODELLING	Refers to the ways in which a leader personally exhibits the behaviours expected of others	Involves **Exemplifying** a set of behaviours & reactions that reflect the values & standards that you would like to pervade your organisation.	Involves **Circumscribing** certain behaviours by avoiding (or actively refusing) to behave in ways that you do not want to see emulated.
MENTORING	Refers to the approaches used by the leader to promote learning, problem solving & initiatives to achieve the vision	Involves **Active** approaches to mentoring which provide a direction & create an environment that is "safe" for learning.	Involves more **Passive** approaches to the development of others.
STIMULATING THINKING	Refers to the ways in which a leader challenges assumptions & encourages ideas	Approaches to the stimulation of thinking focus on **Lateral Thinking** - or looking at things in new ways.	Involves more traditional **Vertical thinking** - more logical, mathematical, or rational processes.
REFERRING	Focuses on the ways in which a leader uses stories, references to important people & descriptions of events to transmit to members information about values & behavioural norms	Referring entails the use of **Positive Referents** - that is, remarks & stories about people who could serve as models.	Entails the use of **Negative Referents** - i.e. remarks & stories about people whose decisions, actions, & characteristics should not be modelled.
MONITORING	Refers to the kinds of important information that the leader gathers, notices & uses	Implies **Managing by Excellence** & focusing on what is being done right.	Implies **Managing by Exception.**
PROVIDING FEEDBACK	Refers to the information that the leader provides to others based on his or her observations	Involves the communication of **Positive** evaluations of people's activities & performance when they are, in fact, performing well.	Involves the communication of **Negative** evaluations of people's activities & performance when they are not meeting standards.
REINFORCING	Refers to methods used by leaders to influence the frequency with which particular behaviours are exhibited by others	Involves the use of **Rewards** to recognise & increase the frequency of desired behaviours.	Involves **Punishment** or the administration of negatively valued outcomes.
INFLUENCING	Refers to the strategies or 'bases of power' relied upon by the leader to persuade others to think or behave in certain ways	The use of **Reciprocal** control & influence strategies by a leader.	Involves the use of **Unilateral** influence strategies.
CREATING A SETTING	Refers to the ways in which a leader structures the work environment to affect the growth & development of others	Approaches to Creating a Setting involve **Facilitating** the work performance & growth & development of the people around you.	Involve **Constraining** the behaviours & developmental experiences of the people around you.

Figure 3: The Human Synergistics Leadership/Impact Strategies

1.5. VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF LEADERSHIP/IMPACT

An international study of the reliability and validity of the Leadership/Impact was carried out on data from the United States, Australia, Canada, the Netherlands, New Zealand and the United Kingdom (Szumal, 2002). Self-reported data was collected from 4,950 leaders as well as 32,470 descriptions by others who were a manager, peer or direct report of a leader in the self-reported sample. The goal of the study was to ascertain that Leadership/Impact is reliable and valid in terms of measuring strategies used by leaders, their impact on others, and their effectiveness; and that this is applicable to data across countries. The study determined the Leadership/Impact tool a valid and reliable instrument for assessing leadership behaviour, even across different countries.

2. APPENDIX B – CEO LEADERSHIP/IMPACT DATA
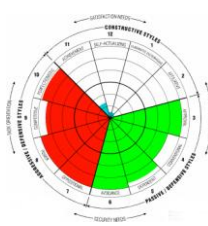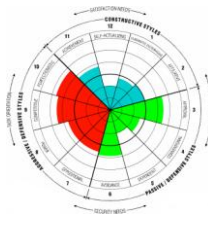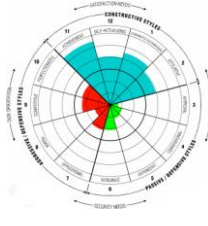
2.1. ALAN MCGILVRAY LEADERSHIP/IMPACT SHIFTS

Leadership/Impact Data	Interpretation

Measure 1: September 2001 (First)

Constructive		Passive/Defensive		Aggressive/Defensive	
Achievement	54	Approval	81	Oppositional	82
Self-Actualising	56	Conventional	10	Power	63
Humanistic-Encouraging	47	Dependent	31	Competitive	88
Affiliative	57	Avoidance	50	Perfectionistic	27
	214		**172**		**260**
	214		**432**		

Defensive styles dominate.

Sum of 8 Defensive styles is greater than sum of 4 Constructive styles

Measure 2: October 2003 (Final)

Constructive		Passive/Defensive		Aggressive/Defensive	
Achievement	67	Approval	56	Oppositional	65
Self-Actualising	78	Conventional	19	Power	60
Humanistic-Encouraging	76	Dependent	19	Competitive	76
Affiliative	80	Avoidance	42	Perfectionistic	28
	301		**136**		**229**
	301		**365**		

Defensive styles dominate*

Sum of 8 Defensive styles is greater than sum of 4 Constructive styles.

* However, sum of Constructive styles is greater than sum of 4 Passive/Defensive styles *or* sum of 4 Aggressive/Defensive styles.

Overview of Journey (First to Final L/I measure)	

	Shift in percentile	% change	
Constructive Shift	+ 87	+ 41%	Net increase in Constructive impact
Defensive Shift	- 67	- 16%	Net decrease in Defensive impact

Top five Style shifts
1. Increased Humanistic-Encouraging
2. Reduced Approval
3. Increased Affiliative
4. Increased Self-Actualising
5. Reduced Oppositional

Figure 4: Alan McGilvray Leadership/Impact Data

2.2. MIKE SHOVE LEADERSHIP/IMPACT SHIFTS

Leadership/Impact Data		Interpretation

Measure 1 : November 2003 (First)

Constructive		Passive/Defensive		Aggressive/Defensive	
Achievement	14	Approval	98	Oppositional	99
Self-Actualising	4	Conventional	89	Power	98
Humanistic-Encouraging	4	Dependent	95	Competitive	93
Affiliative	3	Avoidance	98	Perfectionistic	97
	25		**380**		**387**
	25		**767**	

Defensive styles dominate.

Sum of 8 Defensive styles is greater than sum of 4 Constructive styles

Measure 2: September 2005

Constructive		Passive/Defensive		Aggressive/Defensive	
Achievement	69	Approval	82	Oppositional	66
Self-Actualising	26	Conventional	40	Power	66
Humanistic-Encouraging	44	Dependent	26	Competitive	82
Affiliative	50	Avoidance	72	Perfectionistic	85
	189		**220**		**299**
	189		**519**	

Defensive styles dominate.

Sum of 8 Defensive styles is greater than sum of 4 Constructive styles

Measure 3: January 2008 (Final)

Constructive		Passive/Defensive		Aggressive/Defensive	
Achievement	95	Approval	7	Oppositional	30
Self-Actualising	76	Conventional	11	Power	15
Humanistic-Encouraging	83	Dependent	13	Competitive	34
Affiliative	74	Avoidance	28	Perfectionistic	36
	328		**59**		**115**
	328		**174**	

Constructive styles dominate.

Sum of 8 Constructive styles is greater than sum of 4 Defensive styles.

Overview of Journey (First to Final L/I measure)				

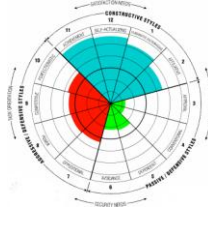|	Shift in percentile	% change	
Constructive Shift	+ 303	+ 1,212%	Net increase in Constructive impact
Defensive Shift	- 593	- 77%	Net decrease in Defensive impact
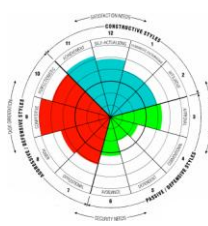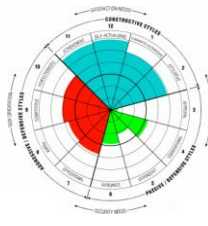
Top five Style shifts
1. Reduced Approval
2. Reduced Power
3. Reduced Dependent
4. Increased Achievement
5. Reduced Conventional

Figure 5: Mike Shove Leadership/Impact Data

2.3. JIM VARGHESE LEADERSHIP/IMPACT SHIFTS

Lifestyles Inventory (LSI) and Leadership/Impact Data		Interpretation

LSI 2

LSI 2 Measure: March 2000

Constructive		Passive/Defensive		Aggressive/Defensive	
Achievement	92	Approval	81	Oppositional	76
Self-Actualising	87	Conventional	35	Power	81
Humanistic-Encouraging	76	Dependent	26	Competitive	99
Affiliative	75	Avoidance	57	Perfectionistic	91
	330		199		347
	330		546		

Defensive styles dominate.

Sum of 8 Defensive styles is greater than sum of 4 Constructive styles

L/I

L/I Measure 1: February 2006 (First)

Constructive		Passive/Defensive		Aggressive/Defensive	
Achievement	97	Approval	6	Oppositional	71
Self-Actualising	98	Conventional	57	Power	67
Humanistic-Encouraging	90	Dependent	28	Competitive	76
Affiliative	89	Avoidance	47	Perfectionistic	77
	374		138		291
	374		439		

Defensive styles dominate*

Sum of 8 Defensive styles is greater than sum of 4 Constructive styles.

* However, sum of Constructive styles is greater than sum of 4 Passive/Defensive styles *or* sum of 4 Aggressive/Defensive styles.

L/I

L/I Measure 2: February 2008 (Final)

Constructive		Passive/Defensive		Aggressive/Defensive	
Achievement	97	Approval	14	Oppositional	60
Self-Actualising	96	Conventional	14	Power	62
Humanistic-Encouraging	92	Dependent	34	Competitive	63
Affiliative	83	Avoidance	31	Perfectionistic	68
	368		93		253
	368		346		

Constructive styles dominate.

Sum of 8 Constructive styles is greater than sum of 4 Defensive styles.

Overview of Journey (First to Final L/I measure)			

	Shift in percentile	% change	
Constructive Shift	- 6	- 2%	Net decrease in Constructive impact
Defensive Shift	- 83	- 19%	Net decrease in Defensive impact

Top five Style shifts
1. Reduced Conventional
2. Reduced Avoidance
3. Reduced Competitive
4. Reduced Oppositional
5. Reduced Perfectionistic

Figure 6: Jim Varghese Leadership/Impact Data

2.4. CLYNTON BARTHOLOMEUSZ LEADERSHIP/IMPACT SHIFTS

Leadership/Impact Data		Interpretation

Measure 1 : June 2005 (First)

Constructive		Passive/Defensive		Aggressive/Defensive	
Achievement	55	Approval	25	Oppositional	60
Self-Actualising	22	Conventional	47	Power	29
Humanistic-Encouraging	32	Dependent	50	Competitive	53
Affiliative	30	Avoidance	38	Perfectionistic	26
	139		**160**		**168**
	139		**328**		

Defensive styles dominate.

Sum of 8 Defensive styles is greater than sum of 4 Constructive styles

Measure 2: October 2006

Constructive		Passive/Defensive		Aggressive/Defensive	
Achievement	69	Approval	5	Oppositional	36
Self-Actualising	39	Conventional	17	Power	4
Humanistic-Encouraging	42	Dependent	14	Competitive	30
Affiliative	63	Avoidance	31	Perfectionistic	1
	213		**67**		**71**
	213		**138**		

Constructive styles dominate.

Sum of 8 Constructive styles is greater than sum of 4 Defensive styles.

Measure 3: November 2008

Constructive		Passive/Defensive		Aggressive/Defensive	
Achievement	99	Approval	1	Oppositional	10
Self-Actualising	71	Conventional	3	Power	1
Humanistic-Encouraging	92	Dependent	7	Competitive	2
Affiliative	96	Avoidance	7	Perfectionistic	1
	358		**18**		**14**
	358		**32**		

Constructive styles dominate.

Sum of 8 Constructive styles is greater than sum of 4 Defensive styles.

Measure 4: December 2009 (Final)

Constructive		Passive/Defensive		Aggressive/Defensive	
Achievement	99	Approval	1	Oppositional	10
Self-Actualising	91	Conventional	1	Power	1
Humanistic-Encouraging	97	Dependent	1	Competitive	2
Affiliative	99	Avoidance	3	Perfectionistic	1
	386		**6**		**14**
	386		**20**		

Constructive styles dominate.

Sum of 8 Constructive styles is greater than sum of 4 Defensive styles.

Overview of Journey (First to Final L/I measure)

	Shift in percentile	% change	
Constructive Shift	+ 247	+ 177%	Net increase in Constructive impact
Defensive Shift	- 308	- 94%	Net decrease in Defensive impact

Top five Style shifts
1. Increased Self-Actualising
2. Increased Affiliative
3. Increased Humanistic-Encouraging
4. Reduced Competitive
5. Reduced Oppositional

Figure 7: Clynton Bartholomeusz Leadership/Impact Data
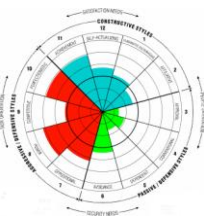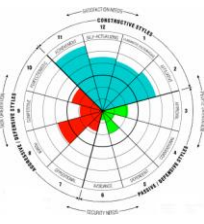
2.5. TIM CASTREE LEADERSHIP/IMPACT SHIFTS

Leadership/Impact Data		Interpretation

Measure 1 : February 2005 (First)

Constructive		Passive/Defensive		Aggressive/Defensive	
Achievement	89	Approval	17	Oppositional	80
Self-Actualising	69	Conventional	25	Power	92
Humanistic-Encouraging	57	Dependent	20	Competitive	55
Affiliative	41	Avoidance	62	Perfectionistic	89
256		**124**		**316**	
256		**440**			

Defensive styles dominate.

Sum of 8 Defensive styles is greater than sum of 4 Constructive styles

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Measure 2: April 2006

Constructive		Passive/Defensive		Aggressive/Defensive	
Achievement	82	Approval	29	Oppositional	61
Self-Actualising	61	Conventional	62	Power	56
Humanistic-Encouraging	82	Dependent	45	Competitive	57
Affiliative	64	Avoidance	43	Perfectionistic	88
289		**179**		**262**	
289		**441**			

Defensive styles dominate*

Sum of 8 Defensive styles is greater than sum of 4 Constructive styles.

* However, sum of Constructive styles is greater than sum of 4 Passive/Defensive styles *or* sum of 4 Aggressive/Defensive styles.

Measure 3: June 2010 (Final)

Constructive		Passive/Defensive		Aggressive/Defensive	
Achievement	96	Approval	29	Oppositional	22
Self-Actualising	83	Conventional	11	Power	73
Humanistic-Encouraging	80	Dependent	25	Competitive	24
Affiliative	85	Avoidance	8	Perfectionistic	43
344		**73**		**162**	
344		**235**			

Constructive styles dominate.

Sum of 8 Constructive styles is greater than sum of 4 Defensive styles.

Overview of Journey (First to Final L/I measure)

	Shift in percentile	% change	
Constructive Shift	+ 88	- 34%	Net increase in Constructive impact
Defensive Shift	- 205	- 47%	Net decrease in Defensive impact

Top five Style shifts
1. Reduced Oppositional
2. Reduced Avoidance
3. Reduced Perfectionistic
4. Increased Affiliative
5. Reduced Competitive

Figure 8: Tim Castree Leadership/Impact Data

2.6. PAUL TIMMINS LEADERSHIP/IMPACT SHIFTS
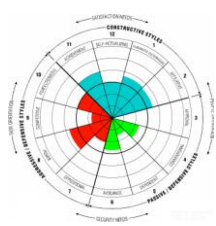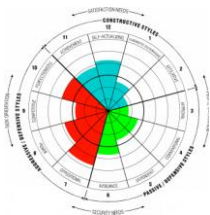
Leadership/Impact Data	Interpretation

Measure 1: March 2005 (First)

Constructive		Passive/Defensive		Aggressive/Defensive	
Achievement	75	Approval	1	Oppositional	28
Self-Actualising	50	Conventional	34	Power	68
Humanistic-Encouraging	66	Dependent	18	Competitive	21
Affiliative	63	Avoidance	43	Perfectionistic	51
	254		**96**		**168**
	254		**264**		

Defensive styles dominate.

Sum of 8 Defensive styles is greater than sum of 4 Constructive styles

Measure 2: February 2007 (Final)

Constructive		Passive/Defensive		Aggressive/Defensive	
Achievement	97	Approval	0	Oppositional	29
Self-Actualising	68	Conventional	5	Power	49
Humanistic-Encouraging	84	Dependent	1	Competitive	3
Affiliative	66	Avoidance	6	Perfectionistic	14
	315		**12**		**95**
	315		**107**		

Constructive styles dominate.

Sum of 8 Constructive styles is greater than sum of 4 Defensive styles.

Overview of Journey (First to Final L/I measure)

	Shift in percentile	% change	
Constructive Shift	+ 61	+ 24%	Net increase in Constructive impact
Defensive Shift	- 157	- 59%	Net decrease in Defensive impact

Top five Style shifts
1. Reduced Avoidance
2. Reduced Perfectionistic
3. Reduced Conventional
4. Increased Achievement
5. Reduced Power

Figure 9: Paul Timmins Leadership/Impact Data

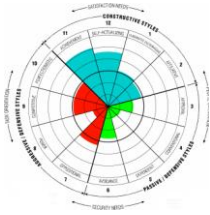## 2.7. DENNIS FOX LEADERSHIP/IMPACT SHIFTS

Leadership/Impact Data		Interpretation

Measure 1: March 2005 (First)

Constructive		Passive/Defensive		Aggressive/Defensive	
Achievement	71	Approval	21	Oppositional	86
Self-Actualising	79	Conventional	40	Power	70
Humanistic-Encouraging	39	Dependent	39	Competitive	44
Affiliative	21	Avoidance	67	Perfectionistic	75
210		**167**		**275**	
210		**442**			

Defensive styles dominate.

Sum of 8 Defensive styles is greater than sum of 4 Constructive styles

Measure 2: April 2007 (Final)

Constructive		Passive/Defensive		Aggressive/Defensive	
Achievement	91	Approval	28	Oppositional	60
Self-Actualising	84	Conventional	12	Power	15
Humanistic-Encouraging	53	Dependent	11	Competitive	48
Affiliative	47	Avoidance	43	Perfectionistic	47
275		**94**		**170**	
275		**264**			

Constructive styles dominate.

Sum of 8 Constructive styles is greater than sum of 4 Defensive styles.

Overview of Journey (First to Final L/I measure)

	Shift in percentile	% change	
Constructive Shift	+ 65	+ 31%	Net increase in Constructive impact
Defensive Shift	- 178	- 40%	Net decrease in Defensive impact

Top five Style shifts
1. Reduced Power
2. Reduced Dependent
3. Reduced Conventional
4. Reduced Perfectionistic
5. Increased Affiliative

Figure 10: Dennis Fox Leadership/Impact Data

3. APPENDIX C– METHODOLOGY SUPPLEMENT

The following Appendix provides a detailed explanation of five phases in the research process pertaining to the *Chapter 2.4.9. A Snapshot of my Emergent Methodology* in the main thesis document. These phases include *Data collection phase 1, Data interpretation phase 1, Refinement and expansion of emerging themes, Data collection phase 2* and *Data preparation for narrative construction*.

The writing of this appendix was incredibly challenging due to the emergent and collaborative nature of the methodology. For example, my understanding of the 'themes' was progressed over various points in time via a multitude of conversations that occurred between Skye, Richard and myself over the four year period that this research has spanned. As a result, I was faced with the dual challenge of shedding as much light on the conversations that informed the themes over time, yet keeping the thesis as structured and concise as possible. In order to work within these two challenges, I use several tables and section headings to discuss the research phases in a structured manner, but I have also inserted key excerpts from my 'reflexivity journal' to display some of the more collaborative discussions and my thought processes via each. As the thesis is already very long, I have chosen to represent only a sample of journal insights; those that I consider to represent my most important insights. I am however I am very happy to be contacted should my audience desire any additional insights on the process followed.

3.1. SECTION 1 - DATA COLLECTION PHASE 1

Data collection phase 1 comprised of four fairly distinct sets of interviews, which were largely exploratory, open ended and unstructured in nature. The interviewees included myself, each of the seven CEOs, two direct reports of each CEO, and one Account Director that worked with each CEO. I will now explain each set of interviews in detail.

3.1.1.   Uncovering the 'Peter Fuda horizon' via an interview with Richard Badham

Prior to the first round of CEO interviews, Richard conducted an unstructured interview with me, targeting my own insights, assumptions and biases pertaining to the transformation journeys of the seven CEOs. In the language of the hermeneutic circle or spiral, this was my attempt to uncover the 'horizon' that would form the basis of my later interpretations of the interview data. This interview, once transcribed, became a text that performed several purposes. Firstly, it helped me to make some of my intuition explicit in terms of what I personally thought were contributing factors to the CEOs' leadership transformations, collectively and individually. Secondly, it provided a baseline for a comparison between my interpretations of what it took, and the CEOs' interpretations, which would ultimately be woven into the CEO narratives. Third, it formed the commencement of my critical reflexivity, as I became aware of the areas in which I may be more prone to 'lead' or 'bias' the CEOs' thinking in the subsequent interviews.

With Richard and Skye encouraging me to make my 'horizon' as explicit as possible to the reader, I have taken some time to share my underlying beliefs and assumptions that underpinned this research process into my own personal narrative, *The Peter Fuda story*. My story is available in *Appendix D – The Peter Fuda*

Story, but a brief run-down of the items raised in my interview with Richard that the reader can expect to see in my narrative are summarised below in Figure 11.

Elements of the 'Peter Fuda' horizon that will feature in my personal narrative
▪ My personal values and beliefs that define the way I approach my work, including my desire to 'speak the truth', to be 'respectfully fearless', and my obsession with planning and rigour
▪ My beliefs and assumptions pertaining to Constructive leadership
▪ Key events and life experiences that have shaped my values, beliefs and assumptions
▪ My approach to the Human Synergistics tools, particularly the Leadership/Impact instrument
▪ The type of clients that I work with, including the method that I use to select clients and the key principles that form our engagements
▪ The origins of my collaborative learning style and its influence on this research process
▪ My approach to theory vis-a-vis-practice, and the 'sense making' stance I find myself in
▪ My motivation for embarking upon this research, what I hope to find, and what I stand to gain

Figure 11: Summary of Items in *The Peter Fuda Story*

My interview with Richard was also a learning exercise for me in terms of process. I experienced firsthand an open-ended, qualitative interview from a seasoned campaigner in Richard. I found that the unstructured technique caused us to meander between topics and subjects at the whim of wherever Richard wanted to take us. I found this fruitful in the sense that it took me places that I may not have gone, places that were contingent on Richard's level of interest and expertise. In terms of the way I conducted my own interviews with the CEOs, we arrived at the decision that I would not to 'lead' or 'guide' the CEOs in my first interview based on my views about key issues and themes. One technique that I found particular value for prompting elaboration was the technique of reverse questioning; that is, highlighting both factors that I thought would prevent (as opposed to assist) leaders from transforming. My initial inclination when prompted in this way by Richard was to say the reverse of everything I had said in the positive sense, but soon found that I was articulating a range of different responses that I had not previously articulated. I therefore took the decision to use this technique in my first round of CEO interviews

3.1.2.   CEO Interview round 1

In order to set expectations for their participation in the research process, each CEO received a briefing document that outlined the nature of the research and their participation. The document explained the purpose of my research, the role I wished the CEOs to play, and a signing panel to indicate their desire to be included in the study. The document also asked the CEO to identify five direct reports whom they had worked closely with between measures of their Leadership/Impact® (Cooke, 1997), and whom they trusted would give an honest account of their impressions of the CEO during that time. Ideally, these would have been people who contributed to the CEO's feedback in the Leadership/Impact diagnostic.

The CEO interviews were held at my Sydney CBD office premises for several reasons. The environment was free of distractions that may be present in the CEO's own office environment, and the acoustics of this

environment allowed for high quality audio recording. The setting was familiar to CEOs, each of whom had each visited my premises regularly for one-on-one coaching sessions, and it was my hope that this might increase the quality of the CEOs' recollections of their respective leadership journeys.

The interviews were largely unstructured, seeking to answer two questions in particular; *What motivated you to undertake a journey of leadership transformation?,* and *What are all the things that helped you to make your shift toward a more Constructive Impact?* Conscious to limit my own biases from tainting or leading the responses at this stage, my involvement in the interviews revolved around gentle probing for more information and clarifying my understanding of their responses by playing back what I had heard. This was contrary to the participative stance that I intended to adopt in interview two, in which I would seek to contribute to a deeper discussion around the responses being elicited. At the point each CEO could think of no further factors that helped them to shift their impact, I employed the reverse questioning technique in an attempt to elicit responses from a different angle.

In addition to my two exploratory questions, I also asked each CEO some specific questions pertaining to their Leadership/Impact measures in order to gain their insights into key trends in their data. Skye, with a far more objective eye for the data than myself, played a key role in analysing the CEOs' Leadership/Impact data. Collaboratively, we devised questions based around trends we saw in the data, areas of greatest change between measures, and any anomalies we saw in the data such as a spike in a Defensive or a Constructive style.

The final part of the interviews revolved around several specific questions that pertained to my experience with each of them and that I felt were of personal interest, such as some key moments I had recollections of, issues in their personal lives and health and well being. Prior to the close of the interview I invited each CEO to get anything further on the record that they felt was important.

Each interview was recorded and transcribed. During the interview I took notes in my reflexivity journal, not verbatim notes of the responses, but my impressions of the interview, insights and surprises, questions for further exploration, and body language. I also made some notes in terms of how successful I felt the interviews had been. My observations are expressed as journal entries below.

Journal entry 1 – "I have not transformed!"

Several of the CEOs grappled with the fact that they had actually 'transformed'. In my mind, this was a testament to the humility of these men, but also a reminder that there was no such thing as a 'material' transformation, just interpretation of transformation. It also led me to believe that the L/I remeasure did not signal a finite end state of 'transformed', that it was a journey that the CEOs were still enduring and even battling with.

Journal entry 2 – Rational and boring versus colour and movement

Related to entry 1, my very first interview with Tim resulted in both frustration and amazement. I had picked Tim to go first because I felt he would be the most animated and colourful in his responses to my questions for a few reasons; his outgoing personality, his creative background, and my recollections of the many colourful incidents in his journey. This interview fell short of my expectations; Tim's answers were very dry and lacked any of the depth of insight I had experienced with him many times before. It was only when I turned off the tape recorder and expressed my frustrations to Tim that our

interview suddenly burst into life. Tim told me that his stiltedness was a result of his struggle with the notion that he had 'transformed'. He said that if leadership transformation was a martial art, that he had only progressed from 'white belt to yellow belt'.

This metaphor spoke so profoundly to me, particularly in contrast to the rest of the Tim's first interview, that I made a note to ask him for his metaphor on the record in our second interview, and to ask this question of the other six CEOs at the end of their first interviews. While the remaining six first-round interviews were not as stilted as Tim's, I was surprised at the creativity that emanated from the others, many of whom had their background in 'non-creative' disciplines such as Finance, Accounting and Law. I made a note to include more kinaesthetic, right brain activities in subsequent interviews.

Journal entry 3 - An awkward role reversal

Several of the CEOs initially struggled to articulate the factors that they believed helped them to transform their impact. My suspicion at the time was that it was a somewhat uncomfortable role reversal; usually I was the provider of expertise and content on this subject, and I felt at times they were looking for me to tell them how they had 'transformed'. I was humbled to learn that all of them felt that I had been instrumental in their journeys, and that my detached stance in the interview had felt strange and even uncomfortable.

Journal entry 4 – A decision to enter the hermeneutic circle in CEO interview 2

Learnings from entry 2 reinforced my inclination to play a more active role in the second round of interviews, so that we could more effectively put the hermeneutic circle in play by blending the experience of CEO and coach, in order to collaboratively build on each others' insight and arrive at a richer understanding of their experiences. To this point, the methodology further emerged upon the suggestion by Clynton that I interview the Account Director that worked closely with each CEO for an even more well-rounded intelligence.

3.1.3.   Direct Report Interviews

In order to cross-examine the CEOs' own insights into their leadership transformation, I intended to interview two direct reports per CEO from the list they each gave me. My primary objective was to 'validate' the CEO transcripts, or perhaps more accurately areas where the direct reports were in agreement or disagreement with the CEOs' own interpretations. As a secondary objective, I hoped that the direct report interviews would generate additional insights that would provide greater perspective in the narratives.

From the list of five direct reports per CEO, a pre-requisite for selection was that the direct report had contributed to the CEO's Leadership/Impact feedback on one or multiple occasions. I prioritised the direct reports on the list according to the length of their relationship with their CEO. Where possible, I chose direct reports who no longer had a reporting relationship to the CEO in order to minimise the risk that they would feel compelled to paint the CEO in a favourable light. Skye made contact with each of the direct reports in order of my prioritised list, stressing that participation was optional, and that their identities would be protected. Each of the 14 direct reports (two per CEO) that Skye approached expressed their excitement to participate, and we did not need to approach any of the subsequent people on the list (a list is available within this Appendix in *Section 3.7. – Narrative Subjects and Supporting Voices*).

Prior to each interview, each participant received a briefing document (available within this Appendix in *Section 3.6. – Copy of Direct Report Briefing Document*,) that outlined the purpose of the research, their

role, and a signing panel to indicate whether they intended to participate or not. In advance of the interview, each direct report was sent a transcription of their respective CEO's interview, to be read and digested in advance. The interview was divided into three subsections the first of which was to comment on how their own recollections and insights were similar or different to those of their CEO. The second section invited the direct report to go beyond the transcript and offer additional observations and interpretations of the CEO's transformation and the impact of the CEO's transformation on them personally. Prior to the close of the interview I invited the direct reports to get anything else on the record that they felt was important. Again, the interviews were recorded, transcribed, and I made note of my observations in my reflexivity journal, as per below.

> ### Journal entry 5 – No big issues with the CEO responses
>
> Generally speaking, the direct reports did not strongly disagree or take issue with any part of their respective CEO's interview transcript. The direct reports did reveal several insights that they did not feel came out strongly enough in the transcript. They also elaborated upon some of the insights offered by the CEOs in some detail.
>
> ### Journal entry 6 – The direct reports did not seem to hold back
>
> I was amazed at the willingness of the direct reports to 'tell all'; that is, describe in some detail the struggles that they felt their CEOs were going through.
>
> ### Journal entry 7 – On the journey together
>
> It strikes me that in both the CEO and direct report interview transcripts, both parties refer to a journey that they were undergoing together. The direct reports spoke as though they were active participants in the CEO's journey. In light of my social constructionist beliefs about leadership, this is not such a surprise. This is also something I endeavoured to capture in the narratives.

As my journal entries indicate, the value of the direct report interviews went beyond 'validation' of the CEO transcripts. In each case where the direct reports gave me insights that clarified or expanded my understanding of their respective CEO's leadership journeys, I took the decision to include their viewpoint into the CEO narratives. Their input can be seen in the form of direct quotations with reference to the source of my information. In order to protect the identities of the direct reports to conform with ethics requirements, their names have been modified.

3.1.4.   Account Director Interviews

By nature of the account management protocol at TAP, each organisation we work with has one Account Director managing the account, including developing the change framework and running all interventions, Leadership/Impact included. The Account Director will generally coach the CEO, executive team, and third layer of management in terms of the change process, whereas my role is generally CEO coach, as well as coach to the Account Directors. The distinction between my role and the Account Director role does tend blur at times. Generally speaking, I maintain the key one-on-one coaching role with each of the CEOs, yet the Account Directors tend to have more face to face time with the CEO and their executive teams than me, interacting on a weekly basis. That said, the Account Directors and I discuss coaching insights behind the scenes and collaboratively design most interventions.

Upon Clynton's suggestion, I decided that the Account Directors who worked with each CEO (a list is available in *Section 3.7. – Narrative Subjects and Supporting Voices*) could be a valuable source of input in terms of the CEO's experience. Given that I had a close coaching relationship both the CEOs and Account directors, I felt that Skye would be better placed to conduct this series of interviews.

Each of the Account Directors agreed to participate in the research and received a briefing in terms of the purpose and nature of the interviews. In a similar vein to the direct report interviews, each Account Director received the CEO transcripts for their respective client(s) in advance of the interview. The interviews were conducted face-to-face at our Sydney premises, and they were recorded and transcribed.

Skye followed the same interview process that I had used with the direct reports, asking the account directors to first comment on areas in which they agree with the CEO's self assessment of their transformation, and areas where they differ. The Account Directors were also asked to offer their own additional insights experiences of the CEO's leadership transformation. At the close of the interview, the Account Directors were asked if they'd like to put anything further on the record. Upon reading the transcripts I went to my reflexivity journal and made some notes, as per below.

Journal entry 8 – Needed to listen to the voices

From the reading of the transcripts, I could see Skye followed the process I had used with the direct reports well. I decided however, that I would need to listen to the interview tapes in order to get a better understanding of intonation, expression and emphasis of points – things which I could not pick up from reading alone.

Journal entry 9 – These interviews are incredibly valuable, why didn't I think of this myself?

I came to understand that the account director insights were incredibly valuable for providing an alternative perspective to the narratives. Mel Cowan's interview would be vital for the writing of Jim's narrative, as Mel has access to a decade of Jim's story that I was not witness to. Leanne Myers' perspective on Clynton and Paul's journeys would also be critical for their narratives. In Clynton's journey in particular Leanne had played a very active coaching role, and had a lot of contact with each Clynton's executive team. Similarly, Ron Schwartz played a key role coaching Dennis, Mike, Tim and their respective executive teams.

Journal entry 10 – Our processes have evolved over time

The account director interviews caused me to reflect on just how much our processes had evolved over time, from Alan, who was the first client in the sample to begin an engagement with us, to Dennis, who was the latest CEO client in the sample to commence an engagement with us. In particular, our coaching methods became more sophisticated, as did the way we administer our Leadership/Impact process. As the account directors grew in their roles, they took a more and more active coaching role directly with the CEOs over time. It is my intention to make explicit the evolving sophistication of my company in each of the narratives, and how it may have impacted the CEO's leadership journey.

Journal entry 11 – Jogging my memory and taking me back

The Account Director interviews served to jog my memory in terms of some big moments that we faced with each CEO. This served to help me access my own recollections of these events, and in a way helped me to shine light on moments that occurred years earlier. I flagged several of these incidents for greater exploration in my second round of CEO interviews. For example, Jim being sent on 'gardening leave', Alan having a heart attack, Tim's involvement in Earth Hour, Mike's self effacing humour in his L/I debrief, Paul's run in with his global boss, and our first dramatic experience of Dennis' team and the 'eye gouging' that ensued.

As per the direct report interviews, the value of the Account Director interviews went beyond 'validation' of the CEO transcripts. In addition to raising insights that I wished to probe in interview two, I decided to give the Account Directors a voice in the narratives where their insights served to inform part of the CEO's journey that I wasn't personally involved in, or where their insights expanded my understanding of their respective CEO's leadership journeys. In terms of including these insights into the narratives, the same principles were used as per the direct report data.

3.2. SECTION 2 – DATA INTERPRETATION PHASE 1

Upon completion of interview round one, I had 29 interview transcripts (or texts), including my own, seven CEO transcripts, 14 Direct Report transcripts, and seven Account Director transcripts. Given my proximity to the CEOs and my inherent bias, Skye and I took the decision to undertake independent yet simultaneous analyses of the 29 transcripts, prior to arriving collaboratively at the themes that we wished to test further in CEO interview 2.

My analysis of the interview transcripts was influenced by prominent phenomenologist Max Van Manen's (1990) approach to interpretive research. Van Manen necessitates that the researcher to immerses him or herself in the 'life world' of the interviewees as intimately as possible, paying close attention to their subjective experiences, and the context in which these experiences played out. To this effect, the research plays a very involved role in the creation of meaning from the transcripts.

By contrast, Skye's analysis of the interview transcripts sought to minimise the presence of researcher-bias through the use of automated text analytics software Leximancer. The Leximancer software was developed by Dr Andrew Smith and colleagues from the University of Queensland. The software has been employed for a range of qualitative research projects including academic works[1] and large-scale research projects outside the academic sector[2]. Unlike conventional text analysis software which are reliant on manual coding, Leximancer is built around a sophisticated algorithm that enables it to search or mine text automatically to identify key themes, concepts and ideas from unstructured texts[3]. Leximancer has many capabilities that make it an attractive research device, some of which are beyond the scope of our deployment of the software. More information of these capabilities can be found in Smith and Humphries (2006), and the Leximancer white paper (www.leximancer.com). Beyond minimisation of researcher bias, there were four capabilities of Leximancer that influenced our decision for its use in the present research

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[1] Examples include research undertaken by the University of Queensland exploring place identity in managing organizational change (Rooney, D. et al, 2010), and intergroup communication between hospital doctors with implications for quality of patient care.(Hewett, D. et al, 2009).

[2] Leximancer is used to drive the 'text analytics platform' within the US Army Research Laboratory (www.leximancer.com). It was also used to analyse data pertaining to the 2007 Australian Federal election (Bruns, 2007).

[3] Detailed information on the "unsupervised semantic mapping" algorithm that Leximancer entails may be found in Smith and Humphries (2006), or www.leximancer.com.

1. **Ranked concept list**

Like most text analytic software programs, Leximancer enables the user to displays the most frequently occurring concepts in a data set, which are displayed in descending order beginning with the concept that appears most often

2. **Related concept functionality**

Unlike conventional text analytics programs, Leximancer allows targets intra-textual 'interactivity' through its *related concepts* functionality. In layman's terms, Leximancer allows the user to explore words that frequently 'travel' closely with each of the ranked concepts.

3. **Easy exploration of source data**

For each item in the *ranked concept list*, Leximancer allows the user to explore the sections of the source data (i.e. the interview transcripts) to identify every instance where a particular concept is mentioned. This functionality also allows the user to identify sections of the source data where *related concepts* travel together.

4. **Export to Log book**

Finally, Leximancer was chosen on the basis that it allows the user to export parts of the source data that speaks to an emerging theme.

I will now take some time to describe in detail the processes that Skye and I each undertook in our interpretive and Leximancer analyses respectively, and the collaborative process we used to combine our output and deal with any differences that emerged. Figure 12 below visually depicts our processes around four key phases; *immersion/upload, coding, categorisation* and *collaboration*.

3.2.1. Phase 1 – Immersion / upload

Guided by Van Manen (1990), I initially immersed myself in all 29 interview transcripts to gain a flavour of the entire data set. For each CEO I first read their four interview transcripts in sequence, starting with their own transcript, their two direct report transcripts, and finally their Account Director transcript.

At this point, Skye purposefully refrained from reading the transcripts so as to avoid formulating any bias with regards to the emergent concepts. Instead, Skye uploaded each of the 29 interview transcripts into Leximancer ready for processing, including the CEO, direct report and Account Director transcripts. The decision to include the direct reports and account directors in the analysis was based around my previous observations; namely, that these transcripts provided considerable insight into the CEOs' experiences beyond 'validation'.

3.2.2. Phases 2 & 3 – Coding and categorising the data

My second reading of the interview transcripts involved formulating a broad list of concepts that were emerging from the data. In interpretive research, this process is commonly referred to as 'coding', or assigning 'meaning units' to various sections of the interview transcripts (Moustaka, 1994, Cresswell, 1998, Van Manen, 1990).

Interpretive Analysis (Peter)   Leximancer Analysis (Skye)

29 Interview transcripts

Phase 1 – Immersion / Upload
Immersion in transcripts   Upload transcripts to Leximancer

Phase 2 – Coding
Identify broad concepts (Manual)   Identify broad concepts (Automatic)

Narrow concepts (Manual)   Narrow concepts (Read, Merge, Delete)

Phase 3 - Categorisation
Assign 'categories of meaning' to capture intent of what was   Create evidence log for each concept

Phase 4 - Collaboration
Conversation around themes Compare, Build, Extend
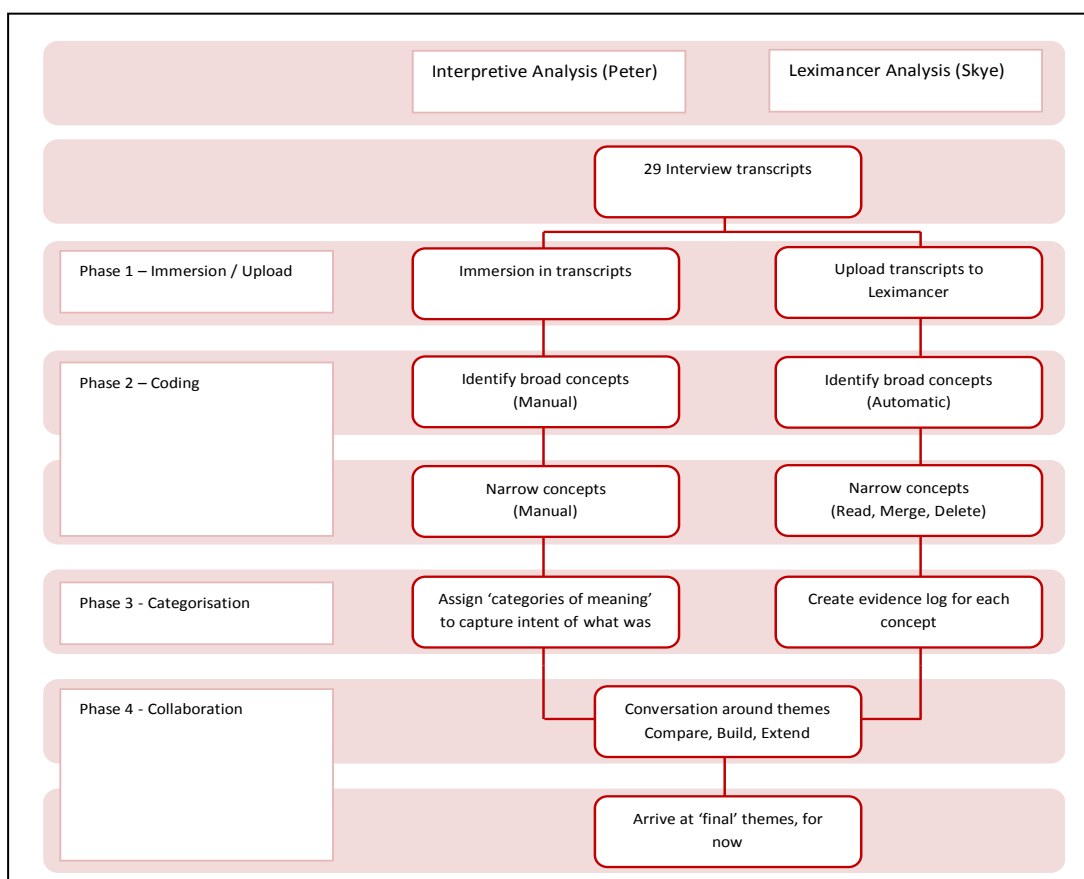
Arrive at 'final' themes, for now

Figure 12: Phases in the simultaneous interpretive and Leximancer Analyses

As much as possible I adopted a discovery mindset as I explored the data, rather than looking for evidence that affirmed my existing opinions. I began expansively by making notes in the margins of transcripts. Upon a third reading of the transcripts, I began coding my notes into a broad list of 'concepts'. Next, I began looking for potential linkages between my concepts, and began clustering my list into smaller groups of 'meta-concepts' or 'themes' as they are traditionally referred to in interpretive research (Moustaka, 1994, Cresswell, 1998). Following Van Manen, I then proceeded to generate descriptions, often referred to as 'categories of meaning', that captured the subjective experiences of the interviewees across each of my 'meta-concepts'. Figure 13 below expresses the 12 meta-concepts and categories of meaning that resulted from my interpretive analysis

Importantly, the categories of meaning represent my interpretation of the *collective interpretations* across all of the interviewees. While the descriptions entail often-cited insights, they are not intended to be a representative account of their experiences. Interview two would provide an opportunity to test the resonance of the emerging themes with each CEO, exploring their generality as well as similarities and differences of individual experience in a more systematic way.

In the Leximancer analysis, the 'coding' of concepts occurred via the Automatic Concept Identification process. Once Leximancer had generated its list of auto-concepts, Skye systematically read every piece of source data (from the interview transcripts) that pertained to one of the concepts.

Meta-concepts	Categories of meaning
1. Organisational context	• Leadership journey occurred within broader organisational context, linked to a strategic agenda • Examples of fear-driven motivation for change (poor performance, losing market share, competitive forces) *and* aspiration-driven motivation for change (growth agenda) • Leadership agenda sits within 'constraints' of parent company, need to manage 'up', buy freedom for leadership agenda
2. Personal context	• Personal motivation for leadership journey entails degree of self interest or self preservation • Examples of aspiration driven motivation (saw peers/role models doing it well, wanted to prove to self/others I could do it, see what I was capable of • Examples of fear-driven motivation (had to make a change, stressed, tired, unequipped, lack of balance, insecure, doomed to fail • Insight that (organisational) change has to start with 'me' changing first
3. Accountability	• Leadership agenda created a mutually reinforcing cycle of accountability between CEO and subordinates • CEO and subordinates hold one another accountable (re. Constructive impact) • Public commitment to the change agenda/Constructive leadership means no turning back • Leader must hold people accountable, be ruthless, take the hard decisions, show people you are serious
4. Momentum	• The more people that become involved in the Leadership/Impact agenda the better - creates positive momentum and trajectory • Momentum builds through commitment, persistence, reinforcement • Symbols are powerful ways to create momentum, must capitalise from momentum
5. Frameworks	• CEOs followed a systematic framework of scheduled Leadership/Impact interventions. Leadership/Impact interventions sat within an overarching organisational change framework. • A planned, systematic approach. Not a quick-fix or one-shot effort
6. Tools	• The Leadership/Impact tool (Circumplex) was classed as an extremely valuable metric for (tangible) measurement • Provided a compelling picture of impact • Remeasures were valuable for establishing sense of progress; 'sense of relief', 'proof on the right track'
7. Strategies	• Leadership/Impact strategies were readily available with the tool, encouragement to take purposeful action • Simple, focussed strategies appealed to pragmatic nature, made process seem 'rational' • A useful starting point for closing gap between *ideal* and *actual* impact
8. Coaching, feedback and support	• External coach(es) provided expertise for a subject CEOs not familiar with, set the framework • Partnered with CEOs, served as role models (values and beliefs) • A key source of reflection. Direct approach, selfless • Family members (spouses) a key source of support for some
9. Team	• Team are key participants in the journey; executive team and direct reports • Close circle of peers a vital source of feedback and reflection • Empower team to fulfil mutual obligations. Critical to get the right team on the bus
10. Authenticity	• CEOs became more authentic, more of themselves, more relaxed, more warmth, more humour, more genuine in how they engaged with others • Stopped pretending / hiding behind a facade / playing the aggressor
11. Values & congruence	• Living by values important, walk the talk, deliver what you espouse, don't pay lip service • Maintain high standards, act with integrity • Commonly cited value of contribution, desire to leave a legacy
12. Awareness and reflexivity	• Becoming conscious of impact is critical. • Ability to view self from another's vantage point. Openness and curiosity to understand others' viewpoints. Willingness to change, experiment with new behaviours • Change requires deep reflection, introspection, stillness

Figure 13: Concepts emerging from the interpretive analysis

Next, Skye began refining the concept list based on three principles; (i) merging variants of the same concept (such as *Leadership/Impact tool* and *Circumplex*), (ii) combining concepts containing the same adjective (such as *coach, coaches,* and *coaching)*, and (iii) deleting 'concepts' that were deemed to be erroneous or manners of speech as opposed to concepts relating to their leadership transformation (such as *go, make, that, find, take, bring*). After these adjustments, Skye was left with a total of 14 concepts.

In her version of assigning 'categories of meaning' to each concept, Skye utilised Leximancer's concept exploration facility in order to read excerpts of the transcripts pertaining to each concept occurrence. Skye summarised her findings via the log facility, which is displayed below in Figure 14. Alongside each concept is the concept frequency and 'category of meaning' as derived from the log. Italicised items denote instances where words frequently co-occurred with each particular concept.

Leximancer concepts	Concept frequency	Categories of meaning and associated concepts (italics)
1. Journey	256	▪ Both interviewer and interviewees overwhelmingly referred to *leadership* transformation as a "journey" - most often cited concept, like a manner of speech ▪ CEOs struggled (unapologetically) to separate their *personal* journey from *team* or *organisational* journeys. Evidence of other journeys also given includes *change* journey, *leadership* journey. ▪ CEOs do not believe they are at end point of journey or have reached a state of 'transformed' despite Leadership/Impact *feedback* indicating a substantial improvement
2. Team	193	▪ *Feedback* from team was critical for increasing self-awareness on the part of the CEO ▪ CEOs generally could not separate their *personal* outcomes from team outcomes. Personal success does not make sense outside of the team context.
3. Tool / Circumplex	120	▪ The Leadership/Impact tool was closely related to the concepts of *frameworks* and *strategies* – part of the formal process the CEOs underwent ▪ Tools are a means to an end not an end in themselves for transformation, but nonetheless valuable in the overall process ▪ Leadership/Impact tool breaks a complicated subject into something manageable ▪ While several tools were mentioned, including Leadership/Impact, LSI, MBTI, Strengths finder, the CEOs predominantly spoke about the Leadership/Impact tool
4. Feedback	114	▪ *Open* and honest feedback from the CEO's *team* was critical for developing *awareness* of their impact. ▪ The Circumplex *tool* was commonly cited as a valuable mechanism for enabling feedback
5. Openness / transparency	106	▪ A culture of open *feedback* is a key success factor in the Leadership/Impact *process*. CEO must lead by example, provide others with constructive feedback, give praise where due ▪ Being *open* to others' input and *feedback* is critical, actively listening, welcoming feedback ▪ Must be *transparent* with regards to own leadership journey, i.e. put Circumplex up in front of whole *team* / organisation ▪ Honesty and *transparency* with the team and organisation generates trust
6. External coach / Peter / TAP	84	▪ External coaches were unanimously cited as critical for the CEOs' transformation (mainly Peter, also Leanne Myers, Ron Schwartz, Mel Cowan, Meg Wheatly) ▪ Coaches provided the *framework* and discipline ▪ Coaches created the setting, safe environment for reflection, shared language and standards ▪ Coaches provided very direct advice and *feedback*, holding the CEOs accountable to their *commitments* ▪ Longevity of relationship and trust imperative
7. Framework / formal process	69	▪ Frameworks provide the CEOs with a sense of structure / discipline / systematic process / rigour. ▪ Frameworks were strongly linked to concepts of *tools* and *strategies*. All are related to the formal Leadership/Impact process ▪ Formal process provided a sense of comfort to the CEOs, provided a rational orientation to a somewhat abstract concept (leadership)
8. Real	67	▪ Direct reports and account directors indicated that the CEOs became more 'real', more of their 'authentic' self over time ▪ This means being the same person in all contexts, standing up for what they believe in, having *confidence* to be themself ▪ Must walk the talk, role model Constructive leadership ▪ *Family* helps to understand what is real and not
9. Self-awareness / understanding / reflection	64	▪ CEOs note developing self-awareness over time. ▪ Must understand impact on others – often a gap between self image and impact ▪ Self reflection is enhanced by Leadership/Impact *tool* and *feedback*
10. Values	60	▪ Be guided by *personal* values, particularly important in challenging scenarios, or where there are no precedents for action. ▪ Leading by values sends powerful symbols, garners *commitment* in staff ▪ Several core values common to the CEOs – contribution centric (leave a legacy), egalitarian, ethical, humility
11. Strategies	53	▪ Heavily linked to *tool* and *framework*. Come with the Leadership/Impact folder, part of formal action planning process ▪ Make the Leadership/Impact strategies a part of everything, build leadership strategies into team meetings ▪ Look over strategies frequently, constant focus
12. Commitment	34	▪ Commitment to the change *journey* is critical. Show people this (agenda) is a big deal. Reinforce at every opportunity. Find ways to demonstrate commitment ▪ Willingness to share Leadership/Impact feedback *openly* encourages other to commit to the leadership agenda ▪ Committed *team* is crucial
13. Courage / confidence	27	▪ Several of the direct reports described their CEO's as courageous for displaying challenging *Circumplex* data in a *team* forum ▪ Positive responses to the CEOs' *transparency* in group forums increased confidence of the CEO
14. Family	26	▪ Family were source of *feedback* and support for the CEOs ▪ Desire to spend more time with family, desire to reduce stress, desire to increase work-life balance were key motivational forces

Figure 14: Concepts emerging from the Leximancer analysis

3.2.3.   Phase four - Collaboration

Armed with our outputs, Skye and I brought our analyses together for the first time. Our conversation began with a discussion about the respective strengths and weaknesses of our analyses, and how we intended to bring them together. I have inserted below two key points from our discussion that I recorded in my reflexivity journal.

Journal entry 12 – Interpretation versus detachment

Being a narrative driven thesis, it was critical that the analysis was built around a holistic understanding and interpretation of what was said. My analysis was by far a more context-driven approach, whereby I alternated between periods of immersion in the interview transcripts and my emerging concept list.

Skye, without having read the transcripts, and without firsthand experience with the CEOs, did not have the same appreciation of the CEOs' experience as a 'whole'. Rather, her analysis was more of a bottom-up approach, exploring pieces of the interview transcripts that had been coded in each of Leximancer's auto-concepts.

Skye's analysis did however enable the contents to be coded in a manner that that was free from researcher interpretive bias, at least in the first phase of coding. Admittedly, a degree of subjective judgement was required for the merging and deletion of certain concepts, as is always the case when a 'user' drives a piece of software.

Journal entry 13 – Skye's relative 'objectivity'

Skye's limited knowledge of the CEOs as interview subjects rendered her analysis as a useful compliment to my own interpretations. I acknowledge that Skye was somewhat knowledgeable of my organisation's core philosophies and approach practices, though I consider this a strength as it provided us with a shared language from to have a more informed conversation than if she were a completely 'objective' outsider.

In turn, Skye and I each reported the concepts that had emerged from our analyses. For my part, I outlined each of the 12 concepts that had emerged from my readings of the transcripts and the associated descriptions for each concept. Next, Skye outlined the 14 concepts that had emerged from her Leximancer analysis, including the frequencies of each concept and related descriptions.

Despite our different approaches, there was a high degree of alignment across several of Skye and my concepts, despite some different labelling of the concepts. Through discussion, we dealt with the similarities and differences in our analyses, and we merged our concepts into seven broad themes for further testing in interview two, including *(1) Motivation / imperative for change, (2) Accountability and momentum, (3) Frameworks, tools and strategies, (4) Coaching and support, (5) Authenticity and congruence, (6) Reflexivity and awareness* and *(7) Journey(s).*

In Figure 15 below, I have attempted to make explicit how Skye's 14 Leximancer concepts and my 12 interpretive concepts were 'sifted' into the seven themes. The table expresses which of the interpretive and Leximancer concepts comprise each theme. I have also provided a summary of the conversations Skye and I had in arriving at our decisions. Importantly, each of these conversations feature in more detail in the *Chapter 4. Seven Metaphors for Leadership Transformation* in the main thesis document, and have been referenced as such.

Combined theme	Inputs from Interpretive / Leximancer analysis	Conversation	Reference to Metaphor in Section 4
1. Motivation / Imperative for change	**Interpretive** ▪ Organisational context ▪ Personal context **Leximancer**	▪ Theme did not emerge in Leximancer analysis. Skye 'suppressed' this question in the automatic concept generation believing it to be context for narratives, not a 'theme' for transformation ▪ Peter hypothesised that motivation, particularly aspiration-driven motivation was an important part of 'how' ▪ Agreed to explore in interview 2	Section 4.1. FIRE
2. Accountability & Momentum	**Interpretive** ▪ Accountability ▪ Momentum **Leximancer** ▪ Openness / transparency ▪ Commitment ▪ Courage / confidence	▪ Peter's understanding of how accountability and momentum 'fed' off each other was derived from a key idea in Clynton's transcript ▪ Skye's Leximancer derived concepts being transparent with Leadership/Impact data, creating a culture of open feedback were believed to be caught up in Clynton's idea ▪ Skye's concepts of courage and confidence were also possibly tied up in this process. Connections between the interpretive and Leximancer concepts to be explored in interview 2	Section 4.2. SNOWBALL
3. Frameworks tools, & strategies	**Interpretive** ▪ Frameworks ▪ Tools ▪ Strategies **Leximancer** ▪ Framework / formal process ▪ Tool / Circumplex ▪ Strategies	▪ Very high degree of alignment between Interpretive and Leximancer analyses ▪ Leximancer revealed all three concepts travelled closely together in the interview transcripts. Tentatively merged into one composite theme ▪ Scepticism on the part of Peter that these were important findings as the Leadership/Impact methodology is widely available to market yet not all achieve results ▪ Despite general consensus that these concepts were valuable to the CEOs, questions remain as to why. To be explored in more detail in interview 2	Section 4.3. MASTER CHEF
4. Coaching and support	**Interpretive** ▪ Coaching, feedback & support ▪ Team **Leximancer** ▪ External coach / Peter / TAP ▪ Team ▪ Family ▪ Feedback	▪ Very high degree of alignment between Interpretive and Leximancer analyses ▪ Leximancer derived *family* as a separate concept, but decided they offered a form of coaching and support ▪ Similarly, *team* was merged into this them on the basis that they too were a key source of feedback and support ▪ Between the interpretive and Leximancer analyses we came up with a variety of roles and a variety or types of support. These are to be explored in more detail in interview 2. ▪ Peter was humbled to learn that the CEOs valued his coaching but felt awkward with how to deal with this in the narratives	Section 4.4. COACH
5. Authenticity and congruence	**Interpretive** ▪ Authenticity ▪ Values & congruence **Leximancer** ▪ Real ▪ Values	▪ High degree of alignment between the interpretive and Leximancer analyses, despite different labelling of 'authenticity' and 'real' ▪ Both agreed alignment to 'values' was a part of authenticity, thus combined into one composite theme ▪ Both noted that it was predominantly the direct reports and account directors that revealed this theme. Mike proved to be the strongest case in point. To be explored further with each of the CEOs in interview 2	Section 4.5. MASK
6. Awareness and reflexivity	**Interpretive** ▪ Awareness and reflexivity **Leximancer** ▪ Self-awareness, understanding, reflection	▪ High degree of alignment between the interpretive and Leximancer analyses, despite slightly different labelling of concepts ▪ Despite general consensus that self awareness is vital for shifting impact, questions remain as to how the CEOs were able to increase their self awareness and the specific reflective techniques that were employed. To be explored in more detail in interview 2	Section 4.6. MOVIE
7. Journey(s)	**Interpretive** **Leximancer** ▪ Journey	▪ Theme did not emerge in interpretive analysis. Despite frequent use of word 'journey', Peter felt it was a manner of speech and a term he may have led the CEOs to use ▪ Closer analysis of the Leximancer data revealed that the CEOs mentioned up five different types of journey interchangeably; 'leadership', 'organisational', 'personal', 'team' and 'change' journey ▪ This was consistent with two of Peter's interview challenges; (i) all of the CEOs had struggled speak about their own leadership journey and commonly referred to their team and organisation, (ii) the CEOs struggled to describe their journey without use of a metaphor ▪ Agreed to explore further in interview 2	Section 4.7. RUSSIAN DOLLS

Figure 15: Sifting of the interpretive and Leximancer concepts into 7 themes

In summary, four of the themes (*Frameworks, tools and strategies*, *Coaching and support*, *Authenticity and congruence*, and *Awareness and reflexivity*) were derived out of highly aligned concepts from the interpretive and Leximancer analyses. In total, these four themes took care of eight of my interpretive concepts and ten of Skye's Leximancer concepts.

One of the themes (*Accountability and Momentum*) was derived from two of my interpretive concepts and three of Skye's Leximancer concepts that were not the same upon face value, but were hypothesised to have interrelationships.

Two of the themes (*Motivation / Imperative for change* and *Journey(s)* were not initially represented in both analyses; one was derived from my interpretive analysis and one from Leximancer. Though conversation it was decided they were potentially themes and warranted further exploration.

3.3. SECTION 3 - REFINEMENT AND EXPANSION OF EMERGING THEMES

Having arrived at seven tentative themes, it was our intention to refine and expand our understanding of them prior to interview two. This meant formulating a clearer definition of the themes and potential dimensions and returning to the interview transcripts to explore whether each of the themes were at play for each CEO and in what ways.

At this point, Skye and I opened the hermeneutic spiral wider and engaged Richard into our analysis. We allowed Richard to read the interview transcripts prior to a thematic discussion. I have included three reflections from my reflexivity journey of our discussion below.

Journal entry 14 – Rational versus colourful

Richard's first impression of the interview transcripts was to note the contrast between the largely rational, unemotive responses that formed the bulk of the interview compared with the rich and insightful responses generated through the metaphors. Without making claims to whether the rational or metaphorical accounts were 'better', we decided they were complimentary and enriching. The metaphors would at the very least add colour to the narratives, and may even contribute to our understanding of the types of journey experienced by the CEOs. We decided to embark on a similar activity in interview 2. Having been influenced by a recent seminar on storytelling by Robert McKee (Robert McKee Story Seminar, Sydney, June 2009) I decided to ask each CEO to choose a story type that they felt represented their journey (e.g. fairytale, drama, romance, epic, comedy).

Journal entry 15 – Shallow dive in interview 1, deep dive in interview 2

Richard's second observation was that the CEOs had spoken about a broad range of topics at high level. This had been our intention from the outset, hence our staggered approach to data collection. The second round of interviews was our opportunity to probe into the themes at a much greater level of complexity/detail.

Journal entry 16 – Intuitive not groundbreaking themes

In terms of our themes, we discussed the notion that that at face value, the themes themselves did not seem to be groundbreaking and revolutionary, rather, they appeared to be intuitive and for leadership practitioners, 'sensible'. What would be interesting was how we pushed each theme further in the next round of interviews.

To this point, our understanding of the themes was largely contingent on the experience of the CEOs. In order to expand our understanding of the themes prior to my second round of interviews with the CEOs, Skye and I undertook three preparatory activities, including *(i) Self-imposed intellectual bureaucracy, (ii) Theme vis-a-vis CEO interview*, and *(ii) Devise tentative theme 'definitions'.* I will now describe each in turn.

3.3.1.   Preparation one – Self-imposed 'intellectual bureaucracy'

Our decision to impose what Richard termed '*intellectual bureaucracy'* upon ourselves was taken in order to expand my frame of reference in relation to each of the themes prior to the second round of CEO interviews. This involved consulting influential practitioner-oriented literature, and works by key social constructionist authors recommended by Richard. In addition, I also explored each of the seven themes via two MGSM electronic databases (Business Source Premiere, Emerald Management Plus), by placing the name of each theme into the search engine.

In particular, I was looking for literature that identified other authors who had written about our themes so that I was well informed for the second round of CEO interviews. Importantly, the 'intellectual bureaucracy' was *not* intended as an exercise to 'justify' the themes. As per my narrative methodology, the primary 'justification' for the themes was still the *lived experience of the CEOs*, as derived from the interpretive and Leximancer analyses. The 'intellectual bureaucracy' was designed to sensitise me to the literature in advance of my second round of CEO interviews, to open my mind in terms of all the possible dimensions of the themes, and to gain an insight into whether my emerging themes were novel in relation to existing works.

In addition to my reading, the 'intellectual bureaucracy' performed two additional functions. Firstly, it played a key role in the *Theme vis-a-vis CEO interview*, which will be outlined in detail in the subsequent section, along with the key authors we were influenced by. Secondly, I bounced off selected authors in the *Chapter 4. Seven Metaphors for Leadership Transformation* where they enhanced my ability to explain the themes, or 'metaphors' as they soon evolved.

3.3.2.   Preparation two – Theme vis-a-vis CEO interview

Up to this point, we had treated each of interview transcripts equally in terms of their contribution to the 'whole story', that is, our holistic understanding of the emergent themes. In the spirit of the hermeneutic spiral, we had now arrived at a point where we needed to move back to the 'parts', that is, consider how each of the CEOs had 'lived' each of the themes.

I was under no illusion that the emergent themes were used in the same 'cookie-cutter' ways by each CEO. I had already begun to contemplate in my mind how the themes were experienced differently. We took the decision to explore this in a systematic way, and drew up a blank matrix with the seven themes along one axis and the seven CEOs along the other axis, such as the example illustrated in Figure 16 below, with the intention of filling every space prior to interview two.

Skye and I underwent a tape-recorded discussion in order to address each space in the matrix. In order to continue to bring reflexivity into the analysis, we once again adopted a distinct role. Skye was the 'literary expert' drawing from literature sourced in our 'intellectual bureaucracy'. I was the 'experiential expert', in terms of my personal involvement with the CEOs' journeys, and immersion in the CEO interview transcripts. I engaged in yet another reading of the transcripts with the themes in mind, and populated our matrix with examples, contradictions and insights pertaining to each theme for each CEO. I also made tentative assertions in terms of which themes I felt were most prominent for each CEO. Importantly, this was the stage where my own experiences and observations of each CEO came to the fore, whereas to this point I had been largely dealing with the evidence from the CEO, Direct Report and Account Director transcripts. Skye then conducted an interview with me, addressing each CEO across each of the themes.

THEME	Tim	Mike	Jim	Alan	Clynton	Paul	Dennis
Motivation / imperative for change							
Accountability & momentum							
Frameworks, tools & strategies							
Coaching & support							
Authenticity & congruence							
Awareness & reflexivity							
Journey(s)							

Figure 16: Blank matrix for CEO vis-a-vis theme interview

Having gone through her literary review, Skye asked pointed questions that related to her impressions of our themes vis-a-vis the theory. She also adopted a purposefully inquisitive approach, asking me to explain anything that sounded like management jargon, or to unpick things that I brushed over in an all-too-familiar manner. I recorded two key reflections from this interview in my reflexivity journal, as outlined below.

Journal entry 16 – Lucrative 'agitation'

The combination of my deep experience with the CEOs and Skye's theoretical background made for a lucrative discussion in which I felt that we pushed our understanding of the themes to a new place. Skye and I did not talk explicitly about the theory, rather, with the theory in mind Skye 'agitated' me in various directions. While a lot of these 'agitations' led us down dead ends, several took me places I hadn't thought of before.

Journal entry 17 – All seven themes applied in seemingly different ways

Our early sense was that all of the themes applied across all of the CEOs, yet in different ways. This however was not something that we could yet be sure of off the back of interview round one alone because of the exploratory, open nature of the interviews. My experience with the CEOs allowed me to hypothesise around the relative importance/weight of each theme, however this was something I wanted to understand in a more systematic way in round two, and I would only then be in a position to comment more knowledgeable about similarities and differences in their respective experiences.

Our three-hour long tape-recorded discussion was transcribed, and suffice it to say, the transcription of this interview is far too detailed to appendicise here. However, there are several ways in which the output from this interview is displayed for my audience. Firstly, this interview became a draft 'work-in-progress' for the seven CEO narratives. Obviously these narrative drafts were re-addressed in light of the second round of interviews. Secondly, the output from this interview led Skye and I to form tentative theme 'definitions' and questions for exploration in interview two, as will be shared in the next section.

3.3.3.   Preparation three - Devise tentative theme 'definitions' and interview questions

Figure 17 below outlines the tentative theme 'definitions' that Skye and I arrived prior to interview two. Importantly, these 'definitions' are intended as loose statements that describe our understanding of the themes as a result of four sets of inputs; (i) the interpretive analysis, (ii) the Leximancer analysis, (iii) the 'intellectual bureaucracy', and our (iv) 'themes vis-a-vis CEO interview' .

In order to make explicit the aspects of our 'intellectual bureaucracy' that informed the *themes-vis-a-vis CEO interview*, I have outlined the key authors that Skye (implicitly) drew upon as she 'agitated' me in various directions in the left hand column of the table. The right hand column of the table outlines the specific probing points that were designed to test and expand our understanding of the themes in the second round of CEO interviews.

THEME	INTELLECTUAL BUREAUCRACY - SOURCES	TENTATIVE THEME 'DEFINITIONS'	PROBE POINTS FOR INTERVIEW 2
Motivation / imperative for change	John Kotter's (1996) concept of the burning platform Stephen R. Covey (1989) on intrinsic motivation Early motivational theorists: Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1954); Douglas McGregor's Theory Z/Y (1960)	• Underlying motivation for embarking on the leadership transformation journey; answers the question 'why' • Can be a combination of personal and organisational forces that 'tip' a leader to the point of taking action • May be a fear driven (burning platform) or aspiration driven (burning 'ambition') motivation	• Explore extent to which motivation was 'burning platform' versus 'burning ambition' • Explore extent to which motivation was 'personal' versus 'organisational • How do these types of motivation affect a CEO's ability to shift their impact?

Accountability & momentum	Jim Collins' (2001) notion of the fly-wheel
	
	Malcom Gladwell's (2002) concept of the 'tipping point
	
	Variants of systems theory and the notion of the virtuous cycle
		• A cycle of accountability that flows through the organisation, first downward, and then upward, with increasing momentum and trajectory
		• Begins with CEO transparency; sharing of L/I profiles, and commitment to change
		• Others hold CEO accountable to their commitments, and vice versa
		• Synergies are created through alignment of efforts, one thing feeds
		• Creates a critical mass of forward movement; is 'unstoppable'
			• Explore Clynton's notion of the 'accountability cycle' with each of the CEOs.
			  o Was it at play for all of the CEOs?
			  o How does the cycle begin?
			  o How does the cycle permeate through the CEO's team / organisation?
			• How does accountability and momentum enhance a CEO's ability to shift their impact
			• Place the CEO back in the moment when they were transparent with their L/I data.
			  o What emotions were felt (courage, confidence)?
			  o What were the outcomes of this transparency?

THEME	INTELLECTUAL BUREAUCRACY - SOURCES	TENTATIVE THEME 'DEFINITIONS'	PROBE POINTS FOR INTERVIEW 2

Frameworks, tools & strategies	Rob Cooke's (1997) Human Synergistics Leadership Strategies	▪ A formal, planned and systematic approach to change, with clear commitments, timeframes and accountabilities
		▪ The specific methods (tools and strategies) that help close the gap between a leader's Ideal impact and Actual impact
			▪ What was the value of the change 'framework' to the CEOs with regards to shifting their impact?
			▪ Which tools were most valuable in terms of shifting the CEOs' impact,
			  o What specifically about the tool(s) was valuable?
			▪ Explore the perceived value of the LI tool
			  o Was it the tool or the process by which it was administered?
			▪ Explore how the CEOs used the L/I strategies
			  o Which strategies were used?
			  o How were they used?
			  o What was the outcome?

Coaching & support	Manfred Kets de Vries (1991;2005) on group coaching
	
	Edgar Schein's (1961) notion of coercive persuasion
	
	Beer and Nohria (2000) on the role of consultants in shaping change
		▪ Coaching and mentoring throughout the journey from trusted, respected, informed source(s)
		▪ A source of feedback, inspiration, perspective and insight
		▪ Various types of support include (i) content (leadership expertise), (ii) process (discipline and accountability), and (iii) emotional (inspiration, listening, nurturing).
			▪ Explore coaching roles
			  o Who were the significant people who helped accelerate the CEO's journey (probe around external coaches, team, family)
			  o What roles did they each play?

Authenticity & congruence	Erving Goffman on impression management
	
	Rob Goffee & Gareth Jones (2006) on 'why should anyone be led by you'
	
	Raymond Sparrowe's (2005) constructionist review of authenticity literature
	
	Margaret Wheatley and Myron Rogues 'identities in motion' (1996)
	
	Richard Boyatzis and Annie McKee (2005) on resonant leadership
		▪ Being 'real', acting in accordance with core values, beliefs, preferences and emotions
		▪ Presenting 'true self' at work, rather than an idealised 'front', hiding behind a 'facade', or complying with accepted norms
		▪ Leadership activities are acts of self expression, rather than projecting an image or searching for status, honour or personal rewards
			▪ Explore whether the CEOs were consciously concealing parts of themselves at outset of their journey
			  o What was the impact?
			  o Did this change over time?
			▪ Explore whether the CEOs were enacting a different role in their personal vs. professional life
			  o What was the impact?
			  o Did this change over time?
			▪ Give CEOs a thought starter from Ghandi and test insights 'Happiness is when what you think, feel, say and do are in alignment'.

Awareness and reflexivity	Donald Schon (1983) on 'reflection in action' and 'reflection on action'
	
	George Ritzer (2000) on 'the reflexive self'
	
	Erving Goffman on the 'presentation of self', role taking, role making and improvisation
		▪ A higher level of consciousness; a combination of extreme self awareness, reflection and mental processing
		▪ Looking at self from a lens other one's own
		▪ Being curious; actively seeking feedback, challenging own beliefs, behaviours and ideas
			▪ Explore the CEOs' motivation for increasing their self-awareness
			▪ What enabled the CEOs to increase their self-awareness?
			  o What reflective techniques were employed / valued?
			  o How did awareness and reflection help them to shift their impact?

Journey(s)	George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980, 2003, 2004) on 'life-is-journey' metaphor, and the resonance of metaphor in general
	
	Greek poet Homer's legendary tales of 'Iliad' and 'Odyssey'
		▪ CEOs expressed their personal transformation as a 'journey', i.e. metamorphosis; a gradual change in stage over time
		▪ The journey follows a path; direction may change, fork, or a complete turning point may be experienced. There are often key milestones and moments of truth
		▪ CEOs gave rich, insightful descriptions of their journeys using metaphor
			▪ Play back the five 'journeys' mentioned collectively by the CEOs 'leadership', 'organisational', 'personal', 'change' and 'team'
			  o How many journeys were there?
			  o Why was it difficult for the CEOs to isolate their 'leadership' journey from the others?
			  o How is any of this important in the context of leadership transformation?
			▪ Play back each CEO's metaphor that was used to describe their journey
			  o Why this metaphor? What is it that describes the journey?
			▪ Ask each CEO to pick a story type that describes their 'journey' (e.g. romance, comedy, fairytale, epic, drama)

Figure 17: Intellectual bureaucracy, tentative theme definitions, and probing points for CEO interview 2

While I intended to ensure each of the probing points was covered across each of the CEO interviews, fluidity and openness would still be important, as would encouraging stories and illustrations that would enrich the CEO narratives.

In addition to the probing points, I had some specific content relating to each CEO pertaining to several of the themes, either gathered from interview one or things of interest from my own history with the CEOs, which I wanted to explore at a deeper level.

3.4. SECTION 4 – DATA COLLECTION PHASE 2

The second round of interviews were once again conducted at my Sydney offices, apart from two, which were conducted over the phone, as one CEO resided interstate and another overseas. My role as the interviewer was far more involved in this round, in which I was leading a discussion around each of the seven themes, probing around the points listed in Figure 17 above, and participating in the development of understanding around the themes. I would also contribute my own observations, experience and interpretations. I felt that it was important to encourage as many examples, events and stories as possible, and probe around the points in time in which each occurred, as well as the particular (social) context in which each occurred.

At the close of the second of interviews, I made three notes in my reflexivity journal before proceeding to analyse the interview transcripts.

Journal entry 18 – Energy for the themes

From my dialogues with the CEOs, their sense of energy and enthusiasm for the themes led me to believe that they had resonated. I got a sense for where the CEOs' respective energies were pertaining to each of the themes/components of the themes.

Journal entry 19 – themes or lessons?

By way of my social constructionist metaphor, I was hesitant to think that it would be possible to arrive at 'final' themes for transformation after this interview, or ever for that matter. Perhaps the themes would more accurately be framed as 'lessons' or 'experiences' of transformation.

Journal entry 20 – Hermeneutic spiral comes to life

I found the second round of CEO interviews to be far more colourful and insightful than the first. My involvement in the discussion allowed for deep dialogue of building insight on top of insight. Very humbly, I feel like I am learning more from the CEOs than they ever learnt from me.

3.5. SECTION 5 – DATA PREPARATION FOR NARRATIVE CONSTRUCTION

Post interview two, I had seven new CEO interview transcripts each containing an in-depth discussion of the seven emergent themes, which gave me a grand total of 37 transcripts. In addition, I also had a had a range of primary and secondary data sources from which to triangulate the data, though 'triangulate' is possibly not an appropriate word in light of the number of inputs, which have been listed in Figure 18 below.

All of these data sources were gathered to form two purposes, (i) to construct the CEO narratives and (ii) to comment on the emerging themes. Importantly, the themes pertain to the *lived experience* of the seven CEOs as they sought to transform their impact to more Constructive leadership. In *Chapter 2.4. A Narrative Methodology* in the main thesis document I have presented a strong case that lived experience is best conveyed through the writing of narrative. Obviously I wanted to expand how our understanding of the seven themes could be progressed from the most recent round of interviews, but I decided that at this point to commence writing the CEO narratives from all of the inputs mentioned above, including (but not limited to) the transcripts from CEO interview round two. In this sense, the writing of the narratives would cause me to reflect on the seven themes in a way that was far more grounded in context than another round of interpretive/ Leximancer analysis of the transcripts in isolation.

Primary and secondary data	Source
▪ 37 interview transcripts (2 x Peter Fuda interviews, 14 x CEO interviews, 14 x Direct Report interviews, 7 x Account Director interviews)	▪ Primary interviews
▪ Human Synergistics Leadership/Impact reports for each CEO, including Impact and Strategies data	▪ L/I folders and electronic Circumplexes obtained from Human Synergistic, with permission of the seven CEOs
▪ Personal observations of the CEOs and their executive teams, in my organisation and theirs	▪ Observations and reflections derived from one-on-one coaching sessions, team workshops
▪ Copies of the various engagement documents containing key interventions, dates and roles	▪ Stored in company archives
▪ Copies of coaching notes and Master Process documents that I had used in my coaching sessions with the CEOs	▪ Stored in company archives
▪ A host of personal emails from some of the CEOs	▪ Personal email archives
▪ Video footage for several CEOs who had spoken with the media (Sky News, ABC Breakfast news) or at conferences (Human Synergistics, CEO Forum, HR Forum)	▪ Sourced from the respective media/conference agencies
▪ PowerPoint presentations from some of the CEOs that had been presented at various forums; our CEO Thinks, Human Synergistics conferences and CEO Forum presentations.	▪ Many of these presentations were mutually created between myself and the CEOs. Those that were not were obtained from the CEOs with their permission

Figure 18: List of primary and secondary data sources for narrative writing

In order to manage the large number of primary and secondary data sources, I drew upon a second piece of text analysis software; QSR NVivo. Unlike Leximancer, NVivo allows the user to take control over where items are coded. I developed codes, or as I prefer to think of them 'buckets' as per Figure 19 below.

After I uploaded all of the data sources into the NVivo, I began systematically 'dragging' items into a CEO 'bucket'. Within each CEO bucket, I dragged items into either a thematic bucket, a Leadership/Impact data bucket, or a contextual bucket for stuff that was potentially useful but didn't necessarily fit in the other buckets. NVivo allowed me to assign multiple codes to a particular piece of text. This produced a fascinating overlay of themes inherent in particular points of the text.

I would now like to refer the reader back to the main thesis document to *Chapter 2.5. Crafting the Narratives* where I explain the manner in which I approached the construction of my narratives, and the forums in which we tested the resonance of our narratives and themes. The manner in which our understanding of the themes was extended as a result of interview two and the narrative writing will be addressed in detail in *Chapter 4. Seven Metaphors for Leadership Transformation*, which follows directly after the seven CEO narratives.
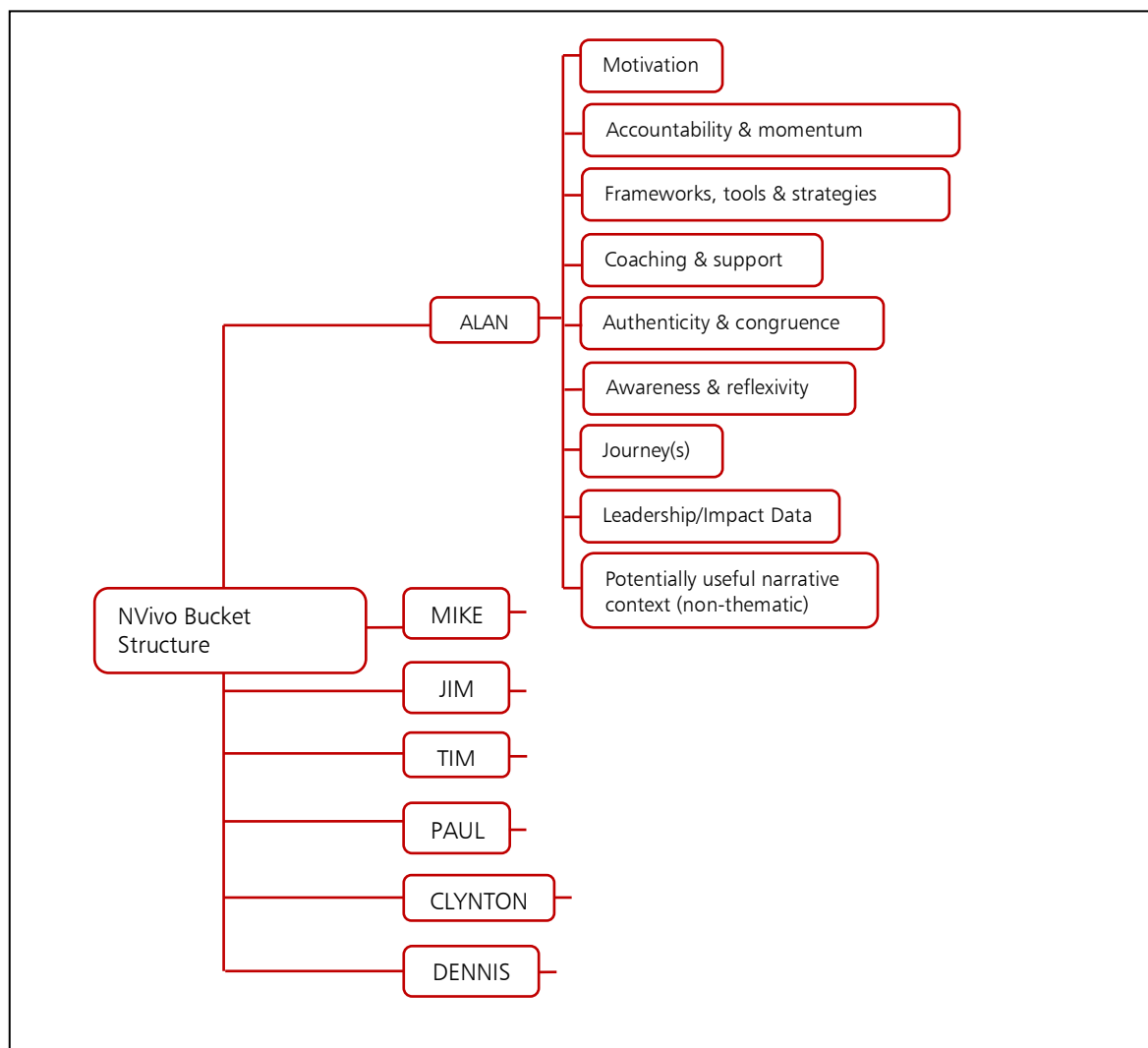
Figure 19: Summary of NVivo codes or 'buckets'

3.6. COPY OF DIRECT REPORT BRIEFING DOCUMENT

What does it take for traditional managers to transform into contemporary leaders?

You are invited to participate in a study of leadership transformation. The purpose of the study is to document the stories of 7 Australian CEOs who have successfully shifted toward a Constructive Leadership/Impact (as measured by the Human Synergistics Leadership/Impact measurement tool at two separate intervals at least 12 months apart). The study aims to understand what motivated the respective CEO's leadership journey and what it took for him/her to make the shift.

As a trusted colleague of one of the 7 subjects of the study, you are invited to offer your insights and perspectives on what it took for your colleague to make the transition. Please note, your CEO has identified five potential candidates to verify their data, from which two will be confidentially selected by the researcher. Participation is optional, and the identity of the chosen candidates will not be revealed to your CEO.

The study is being conducted by Peter Fuda: (02) 9321-7000, pfuda@tap.net.au, as part of doctoral research at the MGSM under the supervision of Professor Richard Badham: (02) 8274-8325 richard.badham@mgsm.edu.au. Assisting Peter will be Skye Phillips: (02) 9321-7000, sphillips@tap.net.au.

If you decide to participate, you will be provided with a transcript of a detailed interview with the relevant subject. You will have time to review the transcript before being interviewed by Peter to understand and document the similarities and differences between your recollections of the respective subject's leadership journey and your own. The interview will take approximately 2 hours and will be recorded and transcribed. Your insights will then be combined with the subject's insights to form a more complete picture of the subject's leadership journey.

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential. You will not be identified in any publication of the results without your expressed written permission. The only people with access to your raw data will be Peter Fuda, Skye Phillips (research assistant) and Professor Richard Badham (research supervisor). The research will be published as part of a doctoral thesis. Upon request, each participant will be provided with summary of the doctoral thesis.

In addition, the research findings may be published in academic and/or business journals. Again, your identity, or any information which may allude to your identity, will not be revealed without your expressed written permission.

If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence.

I, *(participant's name)* have read *(or, where appropriate, have had read to me)* and understand the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research, knowing that I can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant's Name:

Participant's Signature: _____Date:

Investigator's Name:

Investigator's Signature: _____ Date:

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee (Human Research). If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Ethics Review Committee through its Secretary (telephone 9850 7854; email ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

3.7. NARRATIVE SUBJECTS AND SUPPORTING VOICES

CEO Subject	CEO Subject's Company	Direct Reports (in alias form)	Voice featured in narrative	Account Directors from my company
Alan McGilvray	Bayer	Geoff; Head of Medical Imaging	Yes	N/A
		Vaughan; Head of Pharmaceutical	No	
Mike Shove	CSC	Tracey; Head of HR	Yes	Ron Schwartz
		Grant; Head of Strategy	Yes	
Tim Castree	GPP Sydney	Perry; General manager (GPP)	Yes	Ron Schwartz
	Leo Burnett	Perry; General manager (Leo Burnett)	Yes	Leanne Myers
		Tony; Head of Strategy	Yes	
Jim Varghese	QLD Dept Education, Employment, & Primary Industries	Marie; Executive Manager	Yes	Mel Cowan
		Jill; Human Resources Executive	Yes	
Clynton Bartholomeusz	Beiersdorf	Brian; Sales Director	Yes	Leanne Myers
		Marian; Head of NZ	No	
Paul Timmins	Getronics	Ivan; Head of Human Resources	Yes	Leanne Myers
		Barry; Sales Director	Yes	
Dennis Fox	Asteron	Shane; Head of NZ	Yes	Ron Schwartz
		Brad; Head of Distribution	Yes	

Figure 20: Narrative Subjects and Supporting Voices

4. APPENDIX D – THE PETER FUDA STORY

4.1. MY EARLY LEADERSHIP EDUCATION

Don't go to school for me, it is not my education. You need to make your own choices in life.

The lady quoted above is not someone you will find widely quoted in the leadership literature, but she was definitely a leader in my life; someone who stoked the fire of my intrinsic motivation from a very early age, and someone whom I credit with many of the values and beliefs that have underpinned my journey since. The lady quoted above is my mother – Lina, and her words above represent one of my earliest memories from my childhood. Basically, I tried to use the excuse of a head-cold one winter morning in order to skip a school day and was confronted with a scenario I hadn't planned on. Her strategy was very effective; I got out of bed, went to school, and have really been making my own decisions ever since.

Both my mum and my dad – Joe, emigrated from the same poor fishing village in Southern Italy at very young ages respectively. The families were known to each other but it was only in Australia as young adults that their paths crossed more fully. Like all migrants of the 1940s and 1950s, my grandparents came to Australia looking for work and a better life. Neither mum nor dad completed school; both left before their 15th birthday. Like many migrant children, they went to work to support their families. Dad went to work in the wool mills before moving into clothing sales in a department store, and mum went to work for O'Brien glass while attending secretarial school at night.

Not surprisingly, I grew up with a very strong work ethic. In our family, work was not only a necessity but a pathway from working class to middle class; the dream of many migrants. By the time I was born, my dad had moved into the fruit business; first as a retailer then as a wholesaler. I was the oldest of three kids. My brother Mark was born two and a half years after me before my parents finally got it right with my sister Melisa, who was born eight years after Mark. We grew up in the in the inner southern Sydney suburb of Arncliffe for the first 14 years of my life, a working class suburb that was mostly home to new immigrants from Lebanon, Greece and Italy, and my brother and I went to the local catholic school. I was a good student and apparently displayed some aptitude for leadership because I was voted to be school captain in my final year. This made my mum very proud.

I have already alluded to the idea that my siblings and I grew up in a matriarchy. This was not unusual for migrant kids in my experience; the men worked long hours and the women tended to be formidable in order to cope. What was unusual in my family was that mum was not just a formidable lady as we were growing up; she also had a spark for life in her that was not shared by the other migrant women around us. This spark manifested itself in many ways. Despite mum's lack of formal education, she was well read, liked opera, art, ABC radio and art house movies. She mixed with a wide circle of people from all walks of life, and our kitchen table was always a hub for interesting people and stimulating conversation.

I did not grow up in a house where kids were expected to be seen and not heard. My siblings and I were always in the mix and expected to contribute to the conversation. We were encouraged to speak our mind, but conscious to be substantial in our thoughts. Bullshit or pretence in any form was not tolerated,

and a sharp sense of humour was a great asset. I remember bringing friends home who were incredulous at the speed, content and directness of our regular dinner table conversation. The openness and informality of the conversation between adults and children, as well as our coarse sense of humour shocked many a visitor. For us, it was just another fun night around the dinner table. I have reflected many times over the years how well this atmosphere prepared me for my later life, and I still look forward to lunch at mum's place after all these years.

4.2. LEARNING THE LESSON OF ACCOUNTABILITY

We spent a lot of our childhood going backwards and forwards from Flemington Markets and Paddy's Markets. Dad had a fruit and vegetable wholesaling business at Flemington markets and mum had her own business selling plants, cane and gift wear at Paddy's markets on the weekend. In effect, both my parents were entrepreneurs. Dad was a great salesman and mum had an intuitively strong business brain. I would watch her charm a business owner with the same cheeky and direct dialogue from our dinner table, and then take food to all of the storeman in the warehouse. I noted how much joy mum got from looking after people. I also noticed how these people adored her, and subsequently bent the rules, dropped their prices, and delivered on weekends as a sign of their affection for her.

At thirteen, I rented my own market stalls at Paddy's and took great pride in earning money for myself and my family. Retrospectively, I think there were three other benefits to this period. I learned to relate to people of all types, I learned to sell, and like our dinner table, I learned to interact as an equal with people who were much older than me. Customers would often ask me when my parents would be coming back so they could 'talk price'. I took great delight in telling them that the stalls belonged to me, as did all negotiations. As much as I benefitted from this environment, I remember thinking that 'not a lot of other kids do this on the weekend' and 'there has to be a better way to prosperity'.

For me, that was through soccer; the great passion of my childhood and adolescent years. At the age of twelve, I captained my school team and my local club team, and was selected to play representative soccer for the St George district. This meant training four times, and playing three competitive matches each week of the season. Basically, when I wasn't at school or at the markets, I was playing soccer - and I was in heaven. I dreamed about playing soccer for a big club overseas and was singled out by my coaches at 12 and 13 as having the potential to actually make it a reality.

Mum hoped that I would learn a musical instrument or do something else artistic, but I was very single minded. As a result, we developed an explicit agreement. Mum would support my obsession with soccer on the basis that I maintained good grades in school. I went to high school at Kogarah Marist Brothers which graded kids for key subjects into classes ranging from one to four based on academic performance and potential. I began my first year in class one for all three key subjects; English, maths and science. By the end of that year, I had slipped to class two for English and three for maths and science. True to her word, and over my dad's protestations and to my absolute horror, my mum pulled me out of competitive soccer. It was a tough lesson for a thirteen year-old, and it took me some time to get over it, but I learned that the autonomy my mum had entrusted me with from an early age came with a close cousin called

accountability. Though I didn't understand it in these terms at the time, the 'autonomy-accountability see-saw' that I preach today has its roots in that formative moment. I got my grades back up in the next year and resumed competitive soccer at age 15; though I never recaptured the edge I had over the other kids in earlier years.

My time at high school was fairly unremarkable and I didn't it enjoy it very much, though the fact that the school moved to co-education for years 11 and 12 proved a welcome distraction when I reached my last two years. The presence of the Marist Brothers gave it somewhat of a restrictive and conformist edge. There were also strong social cliques; the migrant kids, the surfers, the athletes, and so on. I never did quite fit into any of those camps, so I didn't feel like I had a coherent identity coming up through school. Still, education was a privilege in my family and I was also fortunate that most of the content came fairly easy to me. I coasted to a grade of 75% in the old HSC system and applied to university for a BA because I didn't know what I wanted to do. Both mum and dad were proud that I was the first Fuda in our whole extended family to go to University. As it turned out, my brother would be the second and my sister the third.

4.3. BREAKING OUT

I was accepted into both New South Wales University, where all of my school friends were going to study various degrees, and also into Sydney University where none of them were going. For me, there was no decision to make. I couldn't wait to get away from the cliques and what I perceived to be the small mindedness of 'the suburbs', so I enrolled at Sydney much to the consternation of my school friends. This was a real turning point for me because it expanded my horizons in every respect. I studied modern history, psychology and languages. I developed an eclectic group of friendships with bright and artistic people from many different walks of life. I developed a real passion for music and got a couple of regular DJ gigs at trendy bars in the city. For the first time, I found myself really stretching out intellectually and socially, and I flourished in this environment. I was offered an honours year with the History Department to study contemporary American social history which I accepted. My thesis on African-American popular culture was awarded first class honours and I was subsequently offered a PhD with the department. By this stage, I had given up my market stalls but was earning very good money as a night club promoter and DJ five nights a week. I said yes to the opportunity because I really didn't know what else I wanted to do, and the PhD began with a trip to New York.

I can't tell you much about this particular doctorate attempt because I really didn't get far. I went on a three month trip to New York, and spent some time at the universities of Columbia and NYU. I had a lot of fun interacting with the locals, as you do when you are a 24 year old in the 'big apple'. But when all was said and done, I really didn't have a sense of purpose for what I was doing. I was studying something that I was not really passionate about during the day, and living in an adolescent wonderland at night. I couldn't see a sustainable future in either pursuit and decided on my return that I should abandon both and get a 'real' job.

4.4. FROM WONDERLAND TO WESTPAC

> I think we have both made a big mistake, and I should leave.

The first job that I applied for was in response to an advertisement calling for people who wanted to 'revolutionise the culture of one of Australia's top ten companies'. It was a world away from my life to that point but the thought of revolutionising something big sounded very exciting to me. I went for the interview, and it turned out to be Westpac, one of Australia's big four banks. Westpac had recently survived a near death experience, recording the biggest ever loss at the time for an Australian corporation and narrowly avoiding insolvency. Bob Joss, the Managing Director that had been brought in from Wells Fargo in America to resurrect the bank, was undertaking an initiative to bring in a couple of hundred young, entrepreneurial 'non-banker' type people, and planting them in different areas of the bank in order to accelerate 'the revolution'. Much to my surprise, I seemed to fit the bill in their eyes and was offered the role. As is evident from the quote above, my enthusiasm was short lived.

The program was quite rigid and I struggled with the formality. When I offered my resignation to the gentleman running the program, he said "actually you're paid up for six months, why don't we find something else for you to do?" In my time in the program, I had apparently shown a flair for marketing because I soon ended-up as a Marketing Officer in the home loans division. The General Manager of this division, Daryl took a liking to me. I built relationships very naturally and this seemed to count for a lot in a culture that was trying to rebuild that part of itself. He told me that he liked my fresh ideas and the way I spoke my mind in management meetings, even though I was the most junior member there. I remember these meetings were pretty tame compared to the conversations around mum's dinner table. I soon found myself attending important meetings with senior people and even though I didn't really understand much of the content of the conversations, I survived by listening intently, taking very disciplined notes, and asking lots of questions. Since I didn't fear my superiors, my questions were often the really 'dumb' ones that no one else would dare ask. As it turned out, I would often find that my more senior colleagues didn't know the answers either.

4.5. THRIVING ON THE FRINGE

> You have a very eclectic CV Peter, and this is a good thing. Eclectic people are exactly what I'm looking for.

As part of trying to rebuild the bank's entrepreneurial spirit, Bob Joss set up a subsidiary company to investigate new business channels for mortgages called The Mortgage Company. It was purposefully kept separate from the main bank in order for it to be free of some of the bureaucracy that might stifle the innovation it required. The Chief Operating Officer of this company, Geoff Kimpton, looked like a traditional banker, but he certainly didn't behave that way. He had an intolerance of bureaucracy and stupidity in equal amounts, a huge intellect, and a reputation for being a bit of a difficult character in the mainstream part of the bank. His quote above is my recollection from my very first meeting with Geoff when he interviewed me for the position of Marketing Manager in his newly formed subsidiary of Westpac.

I loved every minute of meeting Geoff. It was like finding a kindred spirit in the most unlikely place. He wanted lateral, entrepreneurial and ambitious people in his company and I was certainly doing my best impression of all three. What really appealed to me about this job was the idea of working closely with Geoff. Even though I would report to The National Marketing Manager, a bright young lady called Vicki, the very flat structure meant that I could learn directly from one of the bank's biggest business brains. Geoff's right hand was a very distinguished elder gentleman called Vern Kelly. Vern was a legend in the bank and in the last three years of his career having joined as a teller. Vern also took me under his wing so I found myself being mentored by two of the bank's great personalities. The Mortgage Company attracted some of the bank's most brilliant minds, but also those who liked to operate on the fringes of the bureaucracy. It was a very potent and exciting combination. Here I was at 25, only one year into my new career, and I was surrounded by some of the smartest people in the bank, and at the very forefront of the bank's revolution.

4.6. A GOOD KICK IN THE PANTS

> Peter, you are a rising star in the bank, but while your [Circumplex] profile looks like this, I will never give you a team.

As part of his cultural revolution of the bank, Bob Joss ran a leadership development program for the senior executive ranks. This program was run by an external consultancy and revolved around a 360 degree assessment of leadership style using the Human Synergistics Life Styles Inventory as the measure. Bob Joss was trying to shift the bank from the very Aggressive-Defensive style that he believed had gotten the bank into trouble, toward a more Constructive culture that could sustain performance over time. Geoff and his executive team went through the program and found it both confronting and beneficial. Based on feedback from the executive participants, the program was extended to include 'high potentials' across the bank. Geoff offered me one of five spots allocated to The Mortgage Company's 'hi-pos' and I jumped at the chance.

This proved to be a profound and humbling experience for me. I had led a charmed life in the bank to that point and my self-perception was quite Constructive as a result. The feedback I received from others placed me far more Aggressive-Defensive than my self-perception. What disturbed me most was that they did not perceive a strong 'people-orientation' in my behaviour. I had prided myself on the quality of my relationships so this hit me pretty hard. My subsequent conversation with Geoff about my results didn't make me feel any better, but his very direct feedback, captured in the quote above, changed the trajectory of my professional career and is imprinted on my brain for all time. Geoff's words stung my ears and wounded my pride, but I knew he was right. After a few days of soul-searching, I decided to do something about it.

4.7. OPENING UP TO A WHOLE NEW WORLD

> When the student is ready, the master appears. Buddhist Proverb

The notion of Constructive behaviour had a profound effect on me. It resonated with the key lessons of my childhood; take responsibility, act in creative ways, keep learning, invest in relationships, and be

genuine. The fact that it presented complex behavioural theory in a simple circular graph called a Circumplex only heightened my attraction. I knew I was a visual thinker but, lacking a formal business education, I had never really been exposed to models and frameworks before. I had no other models of effectiveness in my head so I took it on board as something of a religion. It also began my life-long affair with models and frameworks that served me so well when I stepped-out into consulting.

I committed to Geoff that I would get a handle on Constructive behaviour, and would appreciate any help he could give me. Geoff began feeding me an eclectic mix of books including two that had a profound effect on me; Stephen Covey's *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* (1989), and Daniel Goleman's *Emotional Intelligence* (1996). I came from a family of uneducated migrants so all of this content was new to me, and I consumed these books with vigour. It started a habit in me which has continued pretty much unabated ever since. From the age of 25 to 35, I read an average of one non-fiction book a week; that is, some 500 non-fiction books in ten years from an eclectic range of fields including personal development, leadership, anthropology, history, psychology, and spirituality.

Mixing with a lot of consultants and academics over the years, I have learned that the volume of my reading over this period, while significant, was not in and of itself remarkable. What these people have told me was a little unusual in my approach was the *purpose* with which I selected and processed the vast amounts of content. The basic strategy I used for selecting my next book was to answer the question 'what is most important for me to learn next?' Often, I would have new books sitting on my shelf for months or even years until they became relevant to this question. Once I had settled on a book, I took to it with a highlighter and pen in a search for four things; my key learnings, useful data, useful quotes, and useful models. I then reviewed my highlighted notes and transposed them into a one page template, in soft copy. Aside from capturing my notes in one page, my focus at this stage was on answering the fifth and final component; 'how could I apply my learning from this book in the next week?'

My very purposeful and systematic approach didn't stop there. I not only filed the templates by author and topic, but I centralised all of the data, quotes, and models in three electronic folders. Over time, I built up a powerful repository of content and insights on a very diverse range of literature, which I could access very quickly and purposefully. I also added an additional element to this process a couple of years in. Once a quarter, I would go through all of my one page templates in an effort to draw connections between them. I was amazed at how often I found a solution to a business problem in a book on anthropology or history. I worked out very early on that I could draw connections between concepts very naturally, and package my insights in ways that were readily accessible to others.

My appetite was not limited to books either. During this same period, I enrolled in every manner of course, lecture and program. In the early days, I did courses in public speaking, presentation skills, Neuro-Linguistic Programming, coaching, and time management. Later on I did university short courses like Professor Dexter Dunphy's change management course at the University of Technology in Sydney, and bought tickets for every major global thinker who came to town including Martin Seligman, John Kotter,

Manfred Kets de Vries, Stephen Covey, Edward De Bono, and Rosabeth Moss Kanter to name just a very small sample.

I also decided to get a business qualification and Geoff very kindly sponsored me to do a Master of Commerce degree at the University of Sydney. I completed this degree at night and on weekends over the next couple of years and it really boosted my knowledge and confidence in the 'content' of business that I had been lacking.

4.8. STEPPING UP TO TEST MY LEARNINGS

When the National Marketing Manager went on maternity leave, I was offered her job in an acting capacity. I did very well over a period of six months and Geoff offered me the position permanently when she decided not to come back to the role. I took this as a sign that, at 27, I had got the balance in my leadership style that Geoff was looking for. My young Marketing team enjoyed a good reputation; especially for delivering exceptional service to the business units. This was something I took great pride in and, in retrospect, it was a great training ground for my future consulting practices.

It was at this time that I met John McGrath, the young real estate guru. John is famous for failing at school and then building a real estate empire. In John's best story, which I have heard him tell many times, he talks about his disappointment when his best mate at Sydney Boys High School left in year ten to pursue an acting career because it meant John was left with no competition for the academic 'wooden spoon'. Who was the actor friend all those years ago? Russell Crowe.

We developed an agreement between Westpac and McGrath to sell mortgages through John's real estate offices which was quite revolutionary at the time. But more importantly for me, I got to interact regularly with one of Australia's best young entrepreneurs and I lapped up every minute of it. John taught me two things that served me very well when I later ventured out into my own business. When I queried why an executive might take leadership advice from someone my age he told me "if you're good enough, you're old enough." As I became more intimately involved with John's business, something really stood out to me about McGrath that was very different to the corporate environment in which I was getting my business education; they made many decisions very quickly, and without loads of data. When I made this observation to John he told me that "we don't let perfect get in the way of better." The idea of taking action and then course correcting intuitively appealed to my entrepreneurial urges and I began behaving this way even within my corporate confines, with some success.

4.9. A 'WARTS AND ALL' VIEW OF LEADERSHIP

> Peter, I have had a wonderful 45 years in the bank, but you have seen more change in the last four years than I have in my whole career. That is an enormous asset for you to take forward in your career.

Having successfully steered Westpac back from its near death experience, Bob Joss was succeeded as CEO in 1999 by David Morgan. Under David, the new business streams that I was working on were consumed back into the mainstream bank. Vern Kelly chose this moment to retire after 45 years at Westpac and I remember his farewell party in Rose Bay for more than the expensive wine. Vern took me aside in a quiet

moment and said the words in the quote above. Those words sounded profound to me at the time but I didn't know they would be prophetic as well. I had developed a good reputation by this stage and was head-hunted for a role with Noel Purcell who was the Group General Manager of Stakeholder Relations. He was very close with David Morgan and had a key role in driving David's new strategic agenda around the customer experience. My role was titled *Senior Manager Change and Communications* and was basically formed to drive change in the bank through the communication channels.

Noel was passionate about the change agenda, very innovative in his thinking, and generous in his trust of me. The agenda he gave me was two-fold; find a way to engage Westpac's 30,000 staff in David Morgan's strategy, and manage several consulting relationships on behalf of the Stakeholder Relations' team. Both agenda's had a profound effect on me for distinct reasons. The first saw me partner with Root Learning Inc, a US based company pioneering storytelling and the use of visual metaphors to engage vast audiences in strategy whom we had sourced after a world-wide search for best-practice in this space. The second agenda served to open my eyes to the world of consulting; both its ability to influence senior executives with new ideas, and its tendency to disappoint senior executives with a questionable service model. My colleagues and I were often incredulous at the manner in which these consultants would push their products at the expense of providing solutions to our issues. I also noticed that they did not manage relationships very well. The lead Partner seemed to disappear not long after the sale and only return when it was time for contract renewal; it was a very superficial and transactional strategy in my estimation and certainly did not encourage buying behaviour in me as an 'influencer' of a 'purchaser' (Noel).

My employee engagement agenda put me in closely proximity to David Morgan and his executive team. I got to work directly with a group of executives who have gone on to run some of Australia's best companies in their own right including Mike Hawker, Mathew Slatter, Ann Sherry, Pat Handley and Phil Chronican. The experience of working with these executives at the tender age of 28 was at once exciting and scary. I was very respectful of these senior executives but not at all intimidated by them; my mum, Daryl, Geoff and Noel had prepared me well. What scared me was seeing their human frailties up close. I was initially under the allusion that these executives were masters of the universe, but in their closed door interactions as a leadership team, I soon found them to be human like the rest of us. Seeing their humanity was a real turning point for me in terms of thinking that I one day I could add value to executives at this level.

Over the next year, the staff engagement process went very well and was even written-up as a feature story in The Bulletin Magazine by Finance Editor Bruce Jacques. Around this time, I formed a friendship with the owner of one of the communications companies that was consulting to us, Richard. Richard was fascinated by the work I was doing at Westpac and asked whether I had ever considered a career in consulting. Of course I had, and we began exploring a way to work together. This was aided by the fact that Richard's business had just been bought by The Communications Group, which would give me access to a ready portfolio of target clients. After much discussion, we agreed that I would try my hand at consulting under his banner and if all went well, I would launch my own consulting brand with him as a partner.

After five fantastic years at Westpac, in the year 2000 and at 29 years of age, I handed in my resignation. I not only left the bank on great terms, but with an amazing set of experiences and an even more amazing web of executive relationships. This web of senior relationships really served to smooth my transition into the world of consulting over subsequent years; my Westpac alumni became my future clients, advisors, confidents and friends. As I reflected on this notion some years later, it served to reinforce the importance of building authentic and mutually-beneficial relationships in business.

4.10. FLYING BY THE SEAT OF MY PANTS

The first thing I did after leaving Westpac was to negotiate with the folks at Root Learning Inc, for the exclusive license to their products in the Asia-Pacific region. They had no presence here, and we had formed a strong relationship through our partnership at Westpac so they agreed. The second thing I did was get myself accredited in the Human Synergistics suite of products; including the Life Styles Inventory that had been the basis of my first experience with the technology, the Organisational Culture Inventory, and a new tool that got me very excited called Leadership/Impact® (Cooke, 1997). Leadership/Impact had a far more commercial language than the other tools and fit better in my mind with the commercially driven education I had just received over five years at Westpac.

I was a big fan of Constructive leadership by this stage, for the many reasons I have already outlined. I did note however, that most of the other people doing the accreditation course were more interested in the theoretical and developmental qualities of the Circumplex than I was. I also got the sense that they generally saw Constructive behavioural norms as ends in themselves. I was far more interested in the Circumplex's application to commercial business challenges, and its relationship to increased business performance. I filed these observations away in my mind on the basis that the difference in my focus might serve me well as I entered a competitive consulting marketplace.

In my first six months as a consultant, Richard presented me with three consulting opportunities which he felt were beyond the scope of his communications expertise and more in the 'change management space'. Despite my inexperience as a 'hunter' I was able to secure each of the three consulting engagements even though I came up against far more experienced competitors who wanted these accounts. And despite my clumsiness as a consultant, all three clients were very happy with my work output and two of them even wrote me references. What I remember most about these early engagements was the thrill of a CEO 'buying' advice from me, and the joy that I felt in delivering service to a client.

Importantly, I differentiated between 'service', which I saw as noble and value-adding to both parties and 'subservience', which I saw as feeble and value-detracting to both parties. During my time as the National Marketing Manager at The Mortgage Company in Westpac, I had shifted our approach from reactively responding to the demands of our business unit customers, to proactively understanding their needs. This allowed our team to develop solutions for them that they would not have conceived of otherwise and also to demonstrate very purposefully that we were always thinking about their businesses. After a while, our master-servant relationship shifted to a relationship of equals. This experience on how to build

relationships and add value was reinforced by the books I was reading and the courses I was attending. My beliefs only hardened as I observed my colleagues in action – many of these businesses were completely subservient to the whims of their clients and it provided a very strong warning for me to me never lose my compass on this matter. I decided I would rather be hungry than subservient.

After six months, and way ahead of schedule, I launched my consulting brand; Professional Change and Development (PCD). I very proudly knocked up a set of business cards, and cobbled together some marketing collateral; mostly around Root Learning stories. I had John McGrath's words ringing very loudly in my ears during this time; "if you're good enough, you're old enough" and "don't let perfect get in the way of better." I certainly couldn't be accused of ignoring the latter. In all honesty, I had a couple of tools, some good stories and an enormous amount of energy for my new career, but not much more. I could sell a concept very easily and then would just back myself to fill the substance gap behind it. My mum and dad were very proud, even though they did not understand what I did, or why senior business people would pay tens of thousands of dollars for the contents of my brain. In some ways, it was a million miles from the markets. In other ways, it was just the same principles of marketing, selling, building relationships and delivering a service; just writ large.

I went out to the market as somebody who was an expert in employee engagement. I developed my own concepts and like every good consultant, built models and supporting processes. In retrospect, I guess I had a lot of 'front', though I don't think it was false confidence. I genuinely believed in what I was doing and the value that I could add to clients. During my time at Westpac, I had come to the conclusion that senior executives didn't have all the answers and neither did any of the multitudes of consultants I had interacted with. It was a cocky but not entirely unreasonable mindset based on my experiences. It didn't hurt my confidence or reputation either that Westpac rang me up soon after for another Root Learning engagement, this time with me as the 'expert' consultant. I was incredulous throughout the whole engagement that my former employer was willing to pay double my previous annual salary for eight weeks of consulting, but I was certainly not going to argue.

4.11. RESPECTFULLY FEARLESS AND HUMBLY CONFIDENT

> Peter is a very direct young man. He challenged me with some fresh thinking last week and I have asked him to do the same again with all of you today.

My reputation as an 'expert' in employee engagement gathered momentum and this led to some big contracts between the years 2000-2004 with the Queensland Government, where I met Jim Varghese, the NSW Government by referral from Jim, and most astonishingly with Sir Donald Tsang – the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong public service. Sir Donald was interested in using Root Learning technology to engage his entire public service of 160,000 people in his reform agenda. I was flown to Hong Kong for a one hour presentation to Sir Donald and his key staff members, in which he briefly fell asleep (I later found out he did this all the time, which is why no one else in the room shared my anxiety at this situation). I dealt with his post lunch siesta by modulating my voice and thumping the table when making my important points. At the conclusion of the formal presentation, I took Sir Donald, by the arm, on a tour of past Root

Learning engagements – samples of which were hung all around the walls of the large meeting room. This informality and physical contact visibly horrified his staff members, but he seemed to really enjoy our banter and we developed something of an easy rapport.

Not 24 hours after landing back in Sydney, I was contacted by one of Sir Donald's staff members and asked to return the following week to make the same one hour presentation to his Policy Secretaries (the Hong Kong Government Cabinet). I was successful in securing this business and the project was launched to the top 40,000 civil servants in Hong Kong at the Convention Centre over four very memorable days. Not only was the project considered a huge success, judged by pre and post session surveys, but it was the lead story on the evening news and featured on the front cover of the South China Morning Post. The learnings that I took from these experiences – particularly with Sir Donald, were that I could sell, interact with, and add real value to the most senior executives. More importantly, it reinforced to me that my rather informal and no-nonsense form of interaction with senior executives was appreciated by them. In fact, Sir Donald said as much when he introduced me to his cabinet using the words in the quote above. I intuitively felt that if this very direct and informal approach worked with Sir Donald within the formality of the Hong Kong Government, then it was a good chance of working anywhere.

It was at this time that I coined two phrases to guide my behaviour with senior executives; I would be 'respectfully-fearless' and 'humbly-confident' in all my interactions. At the start, these were mantras for me only – designed to help me to stay 'true' to my beliefs, my upbringing, and to what I thought senior executives found refreshing in my approach. Over time, I not only began sharing these phrases openly with clients and team members, but would proudly recite them as a 'badge of honour' to prospective clients. I think these notions have served me very well in all regards ever since.

4.12. BEYOND ENGAGEMENT TO LEADERSHIP

At the same time as this business stream of large scale employee engagement took off, I was presented with my first opportunity for a broader client change agenda. One of Richard's clients was the German multi-national company Bayer and in 2001, they had appointed a new CEO in Dr Alan McGilvray who had a significant cultural change agenda. As I have already outlined in Alan's narrative, we engaged together in a very intense two year transformation of Bayer Australia and New Zealand which ended up as a recognised case study in the public domain. Above and beyond what I have already said in Alan's narrative, the Bayer engagement is an important plank in my story for several reasons.

Bayer presented my first proper opportunity to engage in a large scale leadership and culture change agenda. It also represented my first serious use of the Leadership/Impact tool. The attention for our case study put me in the spot light in several executive forums and these, in turn, led to a bunch of new clients. In the audience for Alan's presentation at the 2003 Human Synergistics Conference were two members of the CSC Human Resources team. The phone call they made to me following the forum proved to be the start of a seven year relationship (and counting) which has taken my company all around the world and seen me consult directly to the company's global CEO. Alan's presentation to the International CEO Forum in the same year put me on the radar of James O'Toole and Chris Cheatley who

are the forum's owners and joint Managing Directors. Over the years, I have spoken at this forum on numerous occasions and it has led to clients including Dun and Bradstreet, and Clynton at Beiersdorf.

Perhaps most importantly, the Bayer work sparked a real passion in me for the leadership and culture change agenda that took me all the way back to my time at Westpac. When I got a good kick in the pants with my Circumplex data and the subsequent feedback from Geoff, I committed to master the content of Constructive leadership. Here I was, just five years later, with a CEO and his whole executive team looking to me for guidance on this very same content. I had to pinch myself. Even as my service offering expanded in subsequent years, I remained very committed to including a leadership and culture change agenda in most client engagements and several of my latter engagements revolved very specifically around this content including Laserlite, Adelaide bank, MediaCom, Thiess, and the work I did with Tim Castree at George Patterson Partners and Leo Burnett.

Perhaps the most powerful work I ever did in this space was with MasterCard Australia and New Zealand. The transformation there was so pervasive that it was recognised by Human Synergistics as one of their five greatest ever transformations, and was later studied by Distinguished Professor Dexter Dunphy in a book he co-authored with Human Synergistics called *In Great Company. Unlocking the Secrets of Cultural Transformation (2006).* This case study and the subsequent book served to validate my growing reputation and my confidence at a time when I was still very much experimenting with my approaches to change.

4.13. BEYOND THE 'SOFT STUFF' TO THE 'HARD STUFF'

> We really like you and this Root Learning stuff but we haven't built our strategy yet. The team has all read *The Balanced Scorecard (1996)* book by Kaplan and Norton and we want to use a 'strategy map' and 'balanced scorecard' approach. Do you do this stuff in your work?

The first client to push me out of the so called 'soft stuff' of engagement, leadership and the like was Richard Longhurst at Crown Casino. Richard was the very young Executive General Manager of Crown's table games business at a time when Crown was the fourth largest casino for table games in the world. Richard saw the Bulletin article and flew me down to Melbourne to speak with his even younger team on how I could help him to engage his 2,000 staff in a new strategy. They were super-smart, very ambitious and loved the principles underpinning my approach. At the end of our two hours together, Richard said the words in the quote above. "Of course" I said. I had covered the balanced scorecard in my Masters Degree and read the book from cover to cover several times; it was very aligned with my thinking and provided a way for me to link the 'soft' stuff to the 'hard stuff'. On my return to Sydney, I immediately enrolled in balanced scorecard training run by Kaplan and Norton's local affiliate, and built my own package of models and processes to run the Crown engagement.

Like Bayer and MasterCard, my engagement with Richard and Crown is a significant part of my story. The engagement was very successful and Crown became the only table games business in the world to grow 'double-digits'. It was the first time I had ventured beyond the 'softer' elements of management and I found the work on strategy and scorecards energising and important. This content gave me something to

'anchor' the soft stuff to in a way that made sense to me and the client. I now saw these 'softer' elements as a pathway to shifting the performance metrics that got executives and shareholders very excited; revenue and profit. It also served to differentiate me quite significantly from the other 'change' consultants that I bumped up against. I was a change consultant helping a Kerry Packer business to grow its financial performance. In the land of CEOs that I had now entered, I just couldn't get any more credible than this. There is one final thing that the Crown engagement taught me. My core competency was not tied to any product offering; it was solving client problems and providing exceptional service.

This mindset served me very well as I began my engagement with Mike Shove and CSC in 2003, which turned out to be the fourth and final pillar client of my early career alongside Bayer, Crown Casino and MasterCard. Even though we started with a leadership agenda, this quickly morphed into a broader agenda for transformation that included several other levers for change like strategy, structure and standards, as I have already outlined in Mike's narrative. For the purpose of my thinking and my story, CSC was a critical plank because it was considered by many consultants to be a 'lost cause'. The turnaround in CSC's fortunes during our engagement not only declared our credentials to the market, but also served to reinforce to me that my little organisation had something special; even if I wasn't quite sure what it was.

From a practices point of view, it was during our engagement with CSC that I really started to develop a coherent picture about how to make change happen. Like all consultants, this manifested itself in a model (see Figure 21 below). In short, the model aimed to tie together a framework or language for how to understand the various levers for change, with a process of 'change cycles' that outlined where to start and stop. The key beliefs underpinning the model were a summary of what I had learned in my first three years of consulting; that change must have a strategic context, that there were many levers that leaders could pull to make change, and that the impact of senior leaders sat at the very heart of change.

Beyond its content, this model was important for three reasons. For the first time, I felt like I actually started to get a strong handle on what it was that I did for a living and how I could make sense of this to others. I now had my own intellectual property that conceptually sat above all of the great tools, products and philosophies from Root Learning, Human Synergistics, Kaplan and Norton, and others. And finally, I shifted from a product provider to a genuine solution provider. I now felt like a corporate doctor with a tool that could diagnose and explain the challenges of the many executives that I now interacted with.

In the following years, I applied this broader take on change with clients like Getronics, where I worked with Paul Timmins, Asteron, where I worked with Dennis Fox, as well as other companies like Philips, See Australia and Maxxium.

4.14. BUILDING A MORE STABLE PLATFORM

The period 2000-2003 had been an absolute whirlwind. I already had the Bayer case study, was working across a range of management issues from employee engagement to strategy development, had some big brands in my portfolio including Westpac, MasterCard and Crown Casino, and had worked with the Chief

Secretary of Hong Kong, no less. I loved my new career as a 'change' consultant and seemed to be good at it, even though I still couldn't explain what I did in a way that my parents could understand.

2003-2004 was significant for me because it brought some stability to this exciting but hectic period in my life. In 2000, I met my future wife Kara at a New Years Eve party, and in September of 2003 we got married at Taronga Zoo in a near hurricane-force wind; highly appropriate considering the previous three years of my life. As wife, Kara brought some balance to my single minded focus and a sense of excitement
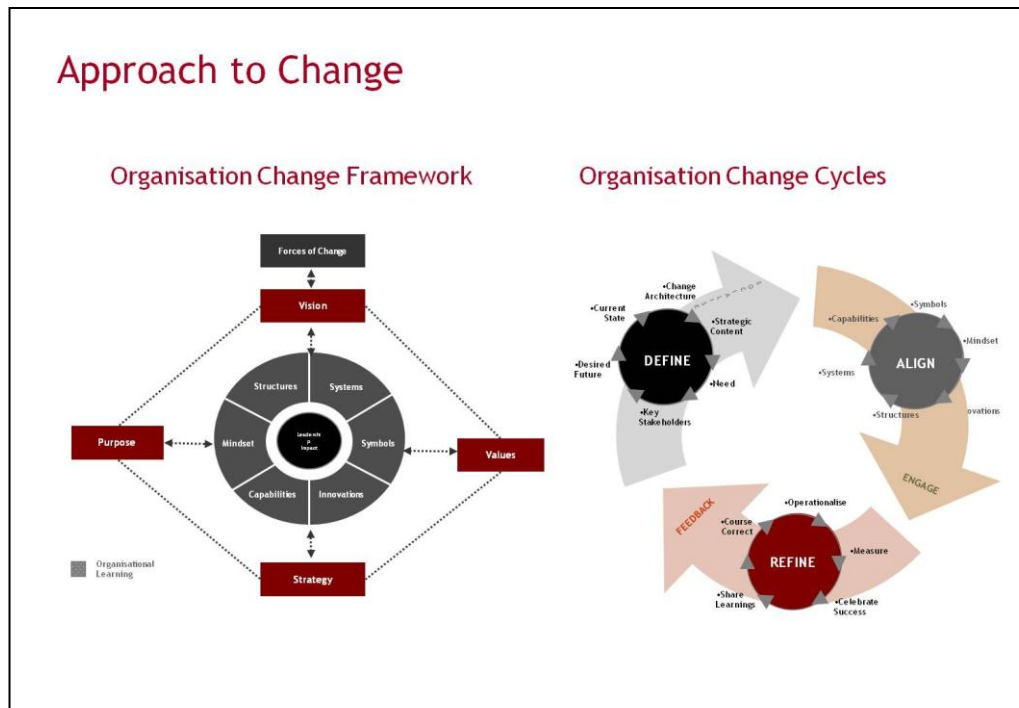

Figure 21: PCD approach to change 2004

for new adventures together. As a former lawyer and accountant, Kara also brought some discipline to the back-office operations of my fledgling business, as well as the financial aspect of our life together. Our very different skill sets and strengths have proven to be a potent combination over the years and I often joke, much to her consternation, that I am 'revenue' and she is 'cost'.

The growth in my clients and reputation, as well as the unique nature of my work, encouraged The Communications Group to look at my business as a distinct and valuable entity in its own right. They offered to incorporate PCD as a stand-alone business entity and purchase it into the broader group. I was flattered by the attention and excited to realise some commercial value for my efforts to date. I signed a three year deal and left Richard's offices on the city fringe and moved into very slick headquarters in the Sydney CBD.

The growth in clients had also allowed me to start bringing on team members. In 2001, I brought on a personal assistant to free up my time for client engagements. In that same year, I contracted a bunch of work at Bayer to a fellow consultant Angie Virtue and in 2004 she became a fully fledged team member. The first two consultants that I hired on a permanent basis were both younger than me; Leanne Myers in

2002 and Ron Schwartz in 2003. Leanne had worked for Andersen in South Africa and Ron was a consultant at Human Synergistics. Both Leanne and Ron had resumes that I could hold up in front of clients, but they were generally very malleable and open to ideas because they hadn't been consulting that long themselves. From my conversations with them at the time, they were attracted to my little business because they shared my passion for change, they could work at the most senior levels with great clients, and they liked the broad engagement model that included everything from employee engagement to strategy development. But mostly they wanted to enable change and transformation in leaders and organisations, and this shared sense of purpose brought us together. In 2004, I also hired a Brisbane-based consultant Mel Cowan, to support the work I was doing with Jim Varghese in Queensland. Finally, in 2005 I employed a bright young university graduate, Skye Phillips, to support the consultants in the delivery of our consulting engagements, and also to support my growing bag of non-consulting activity.

4.15. BEYOND CONSULTING

Up until this time, my focus had been roughly split 50:50 between building my business and delivering the consulting engagements. As our team grew in capability and confidence, I began to step back from the day to day delivery of our consulting engagements. The number of our case studies in the marketplace and our growing reputation also meant that building my business took a lot less time than it used to; the phone generally rang about once a week with a new prospect on the other end of the line. I took this new 'spare time' and invested it into four broad channels of interest to me; all of them involved spreading my learnings and insights about change and leadership to a wider audience than our consulting clients.

Since 2002, I had been running bi-monthly CEO 'think tank' sessions with our clients and my broader network. These sessions had proven to be a great way to add value back to our existing clients, and incubate prospective clients in a way that was low risk and high value for all concerned. With Skye's arrival, we got quite serious about these sessions. We moved to a quarterly schedule, selected topics well in advance that were of interest to both our CEO members and us, and did serious research of the business and academic literature on the topic in question in advance of a given session.

At the conclusion of a think tank event, we packaged up the findings and sent it out to various media outlets. This led to a whole raft of media activity including an open invitation with David Koch's Sky Business Report and the ABC's Lateline Business programs 'whenever I had something to say', as well as dozens of articles in the business media. The media activity encouraged a third area of investment; I began getting numerous requests to do speaking engagements at conferences, but also to executives within companies that wanted to make successful change.

Finally, and most rewardingly, I began an initiative called the Young Leaders Foundation (YLF) in partnership with the NSW Department of Education. When I got my Circumplex feedback as a 25 year old, I remember thinking how much easier my life would have been if someone had given me this content at 15 years of age, rather than ten years later. My idea was to take four 14-15 year old kids from eight different schools, and step them through three leadership modules over three months covering leadership of self, leadership of others, and leadership in action. They would also be paired with mentors from our

CEO network who could help them to implement projects in their communities. We ran the program for three years with great success. In fact, four of the CEOs in this doctorate were mentors.

The four investment pillars had a powerful effect on my journey, and also the journeys of many of my CEO clients who were involved in the various activities. For my clients, these pillars served to reinforce a values alignment with me and my company. They contributed to the idea of a special little club, at the forefront of management practice, with very limited membership. They provided insights, reinforcement and sustenance for the respective CEOs' own leadership journeys. And they reinforced the importance of notions like purpose and contribution. For me, the four investment centres served to refine and focus my ideas, and deconstruct the success of our change efforts. They encouraged me to learn and contribute at a rate that was at least commensurate with the expectations I held of our clients. They reinforced a service-based model of leadership, and a belief in abundance and contribution. As I reflect on all of these investment centres today, I am struck by how strongly they contributed to the virtuous cycle that surrounded me and my company over those years.

4.16. COMMITTING TO THIS DOCTORATE

> It's now or never.

I commenced the mandatory coursework for this DBA on December 16, 2005. I can be very precise about this date because I had to leave class at lunch time to attend to the small matter of my daughter Isabella's birth. Kara had gone to the hospital as a precaution in the morning but was fairly certain our baby was not yet ready to come. Four hours later, I was speeding down the Pacific Highway with the best excuse ever for leaving class early. The lecturer was very understanding and I made it to the hospital with a couple of hours to spare before the real action began. My dad was not around much when we were kids and the child rearing was pretty much left to mum. Isabella's birth served to strengthen my resolve to lead a life of purpose and balance, and she has provided constant reinforcement for this intention ever since.

Knowing that Kara was pregnant before committing to this doctorate forced me to get very clear on my motivation for wanting to undertake it. My first reason was to advance the commitment to learning and education that had been instilled in me as a child. The second reason was to open up the future possibility of teaching. The YLF had really struck a chord in me and I often thought about teaching at university. The third reason was to validate and systemise the leadership and change practices of my organisation. We had experienced some extraordinary success over the previous years and, to be frank, I was not entirely sure why. The idea of reflecting on our successes and challenges, then being able to embed those learnings in our consulting practices was something that got me very excited. Finally, I felt that I was uniquely placed to fill a middle ground between academia and professional practice; to act as something of a translator between these two worlds. My clients were very suspicious of theoretical approaches to management, but wanted to implement change that made a difference. I felt like I was uniquely placed to bring a more rigorous form of practice to the corporate world, and maybe even bring a more practical form of research to academia. In the end, Kara and I agreed that if I was ever going to do it, this was the time. In her words above "it's now or never".

With Kara's understanding and help, I got through the coursework in one year. To this day, I'm sure her mathematical brain and my very understanding professor were the only reasons I got through quantitative research methods with the credit mark that I required to progress to this thesis. Though we were told to wait until the end of our coursework before approaching potential supervisors, I confess that I initiated this agenda with gusto very early in the piece. After meeting with three potential supervisors, I was sold on Professor Richard Badham at our very first meeting. I had done my homework on Richard. I knew that he was very well respected as an academic and that he had a history of getting people through a doctorate. But what sold me on Richard was his open contempt for unnecessary politics and bureaucracy, his genuine enthusiasm for research and learning, and his direct manner of communication. It felt like a match made in heaven and I can trace many of the innovations in this study back to that very first meeting.

As the research question shaped up around the notion of 'leadership transformation', I began speaking with the CEOs who I really wanted to be part of the study. I was humbled by their willingness to commit to the project, even in its formative stages, amid the many pressures of their busy lives. I saw this as another validation of my beliefs about building values-based, mutually-beneficial relationships. Perhaps more importantly, the commitment of the seven CEOs in this study has driven a kind of moral responsibility in me to do the best possible work I am capable of, and do it with a level of authenticity that honours their commitment.

4.17. A TIME OF RENEWAL

In 2007, a convergence of forces encouraged me to rethink my consulting business. My three year deal was coming to an end and I had a formal decision point approaching. The Communications Group had been acquired in late 2006 by a global marketing services company and my business became like a pumpkin in a fruit bowl. Many of our big and long-term clients like Crown Casino, CSC, MasterCard, Dun and Bradstreet, Philips and Asteron had either come to a conclusion or were nearing the end of our change agenda. There was also some movement in my team. Leanne was pregnant with her first child, Mel was moving to Ireland for family reasons, and Skye, Ron and Angie had all expressed a desire for some time off for different reasons. Personally, I felt that I needed some time and space to reflect on an amazing seven years before committing to the next step in my professional life. I had a great relationship with the local CEO of the parent company and we agreed that, all things considered, we should go our separate ways. In late 2007, a truly special time for me came to a close.

The first thing Kara and I did was to plan a European holiday. In our seven years together, we had never been away for more than ten days because of the pressures of running my company so we committed to spend three weeks travelling the Italian Riviera. We had resolved to leave Isabella, 18 months old at the time, with her grandparents while we were away. This was very exciting to Bella as she was very close to both sets of grandparents but a little nerve wracking for us as new parents. Being a lawyer, Kara processed this concern by declaring that we must formalise our wills before we leave in the event that anything happened. As I went through the joyful process of visualising my death, I came to the conclusion

that I should leave my only child something a little more profound than financial security in the event that the plane went down. Particularly since I had been privileged in my 36 years to interact with, and learn from some of the world's greatest teachers in the fields of personal development, psychology and spirituality. I resolved to write my daughter a letter that she could open one day if the worst happened.

4.18. SYSTEMISING MY LEARNINGS AND BELIEFS – FOR NOW

As I went back through all of my learning templates that I had developed over the years, particularly some of the more spiritually oriented content that I had been absorbing in recent times from people like Wayne Dyer, Deepak Chopra, Eckhart Tolle and David Hawkins, an idea crystallised in my mind. I was raised a catholic but, like my mum, had become very sceptical of organised religion. At the same time, I felt like many of my most important learnings and beliefs were 'spiritual' in nature. I felt like if I could get these learnings down to a short list then, not only would they serve the purpose of guiding Isabella at some future date, but they could guide and inform my life immediately. This was particularly appealing considering the size of the change I had just made in my professional life. I include these seven, very personal principles here because from the time I committed them to paper in 2007, they have informed every aspect of my life, including my work and this study.

The first notion is that of 'potential'. My own life had unfolded in ways that I could not have dreamed about growing up in Arncliffe as the son of an uneducated, working-class migrant family. The second notion was that of 'abundance'. I had found that being generous with others not only felt good but seemed to produce a flow of abundance back to me. The third notion was that of 'Karma'; a very well worn principle in every major religious tradition. Throughout my schooling, I was always struck by what I perceived to be the hypocrisy of people who preached love and tolerance, and then jumped on any kid who stepped out of line. I resolved to 'do the right thing', as I perceived it, at all times. The fourth notion was the very eastern principle of 'least effort'. Coming from a hot-blooded Italian lineage, and being very ambitious, I had gotten ahead in my early years through hard work, determination, and competitiveness. In my later years, I had opened up to the notion that imagination is more powerful than drive and determination. As I played with this notion, I found that my effort decreased, along with my stress, at the same time as my outcomes increased – not to mention the quality of my relationships. The Peruvian anthropologist Carlos Castaneda once said that "most of our energy goes into upholding our importance". I found that as I let go of the need to be right, I had a lot more time and energy on my hands. The fifth notion was that of 'expansion'; basically, choosing to focus only on what I wanted to manifest rather than spending 'mental currency' on that which I did not want. The sixth notion was that of 'detachment' – something that each of the CEOs talk about in their narratives in one way or another. In simple terms, this is about letting go and not forcing outcomes; a principle which is often opposed to the notion of 'expansion' and very challenging for most A-type personalities to live – including me. Finally, the seventh notion is that of 'purposeful contribution'; the idea that we have been put on this earth to use our gifts in the service of others.

Each of these notions had been forming in my mind and present in my behaviour to varying degrees for many years. The process of writing Isabella a 'posthumous letter' proved to be a very powerful exercise in crystallising what I believed in most deeply. As I sit here writing this, some three years later, these seven notions guide all aspects of my life more strongly than ever. The exercise was so powerful for me that I have since used it to help several CEOs clarify their own deeply held beliefs in times of change.

All in all, I was out of action for about seven months and it was a joyful time. I spent time with Kara and Isabella, got stuck into this doctorate, and began to plan my next enterprise. One thing that occurred to me was that I was not in the 'change' business, I was in the 'alignment' business; that is, helping CEOs align their organisations and their own leadership to their aspirations. When I did incorporate my new company, I called it The Alignment Partnership (TAP), based on this notion. I also reflected on what I had learned with our clients from a practices point of view. These reflections led me to a far more comprehensive model for transformation and alignment (see Figure 22) which drives all of our work today.
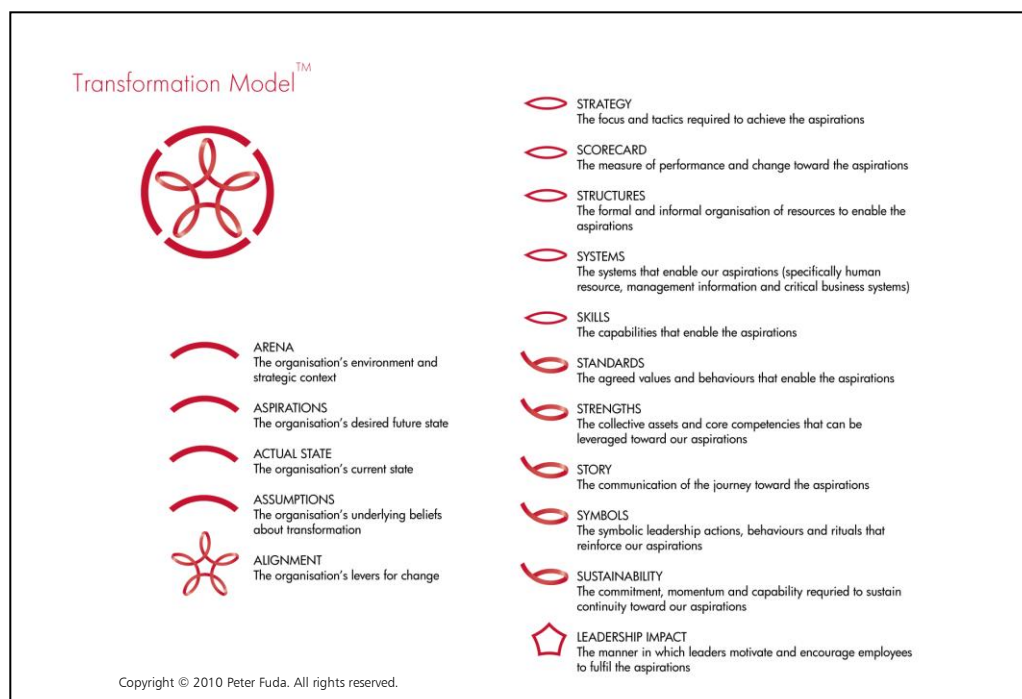

Figure 22: TAP Transformation Model 2008

The second thing that occurred to me was that my learning style was collaborative and my work only made sense as I undertook it with like-minded people. This was a big insight for me because during my time off, I had seriously considered becoming a lone consultant again. TAP launched in mid-2008 and picked up speed very quickly. By 2009, Ron, Leanne, Angie and Skye combined with four new team members; Graham, Martin, Ian and Johanna, to support a whole range of new clients including Telstra, Kraft, Peabody, Suncorp, Xstrata, PZ Cussons, Pacific Brands, Goodman Fielder, and CSC internationally in Asia, the UK and the USA. Our new focus on transformation and alignment, as well as our comprehensive transformation model, has really resonated in the marketplace. The collective energy of our little company

still excites me on a daily basis, and many of my experiences over the last two years in the TAP environment have positively shaped this doctoral study.

4.19. THE MOST INFLUENTIAL BOOKS IN MY THOUGHT AND DEVELOPMENT

As part of this personal narrative, Richard thought it would be beneficial for the reader to understand which 25 or so books influenced my thinking and practices the most over my life leading up to this doctoral study. I struggled to find a neat place for these in my narrative so have included a list of books in this post-script so it can be viewed in one place. After much consternation, I have gotten this list down to 34 and present it in order of publication. The first paragraph is for those books published up to 2000 which covers my time at Westpac, and the second paragraph is for those published after 2000 when I launched into the world of consulting. The list ends at 2006, the year that I began the coursework for this doctorate.

Edward De Bono, *Lateral Thinking: Creativity Step by Step* (1970), Edward De Bono, *Six Thinking Hats* (1985), Stephen R. Covey, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change* (1989), Warren Bennis, *On Becoming A Leader* (1989), Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of The Learning Organization* (1990), Martin Seligman, *Learned Optimism: How to Change Your Mind and Your Life* (1990), Margaret Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science: Discovering Order in a Chaotic World* (1994), Deepak Chopra, *The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success* (1994), James O'Toole, *Leading Change: The Argument for Values Based Leadership* (1995), Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than I.Q.* (1995), David Hawkins, *Power Vs Force* (1995), Robert Quinn, *Deep Change: Discovering the Leader Within* (1996), Don Edward Beck & Christopher C. Cowen, *Spiral Dynamics: Mastering Values Leadership and Change* (1996), John P. Kotter, *Leading Change* (1996), Robert Kaplan & David Norton, *The Balanced Scorecard: Translating Strategy into Action* (1996), and Charles Handy, *The Hungry Spirit, Beyond Capitalism: A Quest for Purpose in the Modern World* (1998)

Doug Stace & Dexter Dunphy, *Beyond the Boundaries: Leading and Re-creating the Successful Enterprise* (2001), Jim Collins, *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap...and Other Don't* (2001), Marcus Buckingham & Donald Clifton, *Now Discover Your Strengths* (2001), Peter Drucker, *The Essential Drucker: Management, the Individual & Society* (2001), Dean Anderson & Linda Anderson, *Beyond Change Management : Advanced Strategies for Today's Transformational Leaders* (2001), Larry Bossidy, Ram Charan, & Charles Burck, *Execution: The Discipline of Getting Things Done* (2002), Martin Seligman, *Authentic Happiness: Using the New Positive Psychology to Realize Your Potential for Lasting Fulfillment* (2002), Rosabeth Moss Kanter, *Confidence: How Winning Streaks and Losing Streaks Begin and End* (2004), Wayne Dyer, *The Power of Intention* 2004, Malcolm Gladwell, *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking* (2005), Margaret Wheatley, *Finding Our Way: leadership for an uncertain time* (2005), Dan Pink, *A Whole New Mind: moving from the Information Age to the Conceptual Age* (2005), W. Chan. Kim & Renée Mauborgne, *Blue Ocean Strategy: How to Create Uncontested Market Space and Make Competition Irrelevant* (2005), Stephen Denning, *The Leader's Guide to Storytelling: Mastering the Art and Discipline of Business Narrative* (2005), Stephen M.R. Covey, *The Speed of Trust: The One Thing That*

Changes Everything (2006), Manfred Kets de Vries, *The Leadership Mystique: Leading Behaviour in the Human Enterprise* (2006), Jeffrey Pfeffer & Robert Sutton, *Hard Facts, Dangerous Half-Truths, and Total Nonsense: Profiting from Evidence-Based Management* (2006), and Lee Bolman & Terence Deal, *The Wizard and the Warrior: Leading with Passion and Power* (2006).

4.20. POST-SCRIPT ON THIS STORY

I have resisted writing my personal story since Richard and Skye recommended that I do it over twelve months ago – and it has proved a very challenging exercise. At an intellectual level, their reasoning resonated with me; they told me "you are woven into all of the CEO stories. The reader needs to know who you are and why you behaved the way you did with each of the CEOs on their journeys". Despite accepting this logic, this narrative is the last piece I am writing for the doctorate only a few short days before submission.

I decided at 35 years of age that my purpose in life was to *enable transformation in others*. Almost five years later, this sense of purpose guides my decisions; both big and small. Consequently, a core tension for me in writing this personal narrative was balancing my deep sense of purpose with the need, perceived or real, to talk about myself in a way that encourages the reader to accept my credibility, recognise my integrity, and trust my intentions in my telling of each CEO narrative. Hopefully I have achieved a balance between these tensions.

5.   APPENDIX E - RESONANCE WITH MANAGEMENT PRACTITIONERS

5.1. FEEDBACK FROM THE 'HUMAN SYNERGISTICS 11TH AUSTRALIAN CONFERENCE ON CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP' - SYDNEY, MELBOURNE & PERTH, SEPTEMBER 2009

Source: Sample of conference feedback supplied by Quentin Jones, Managing Director of Human Synergistics Australia

- Congratulations on delivering the best conference yet in Melbourne. I thought the performance at the beginning had real impact and modelled your message. I found the research and reflections from both Rob Cooke and Peter Fuda insightful, useful and interesting and the CEO case studies excellent. I brought 6 clients across from Adelaide and it provided wonderful insights and additional understanding on the Human Synergistics tools which built on the cultural change process I am working with them on.

- Many thanks for a fabulous opportunity to attend your conference on Culture and Leadership. The things I have taken away today are invaluable, and even in our smaller organization, give great food for thought and focused direction. The speakers were very engaging, in particular Peter Fuda. Respect and appreciation were strong undercurrents amongst all that was conveyed to the audience – calming and empowering.

- The CEO speakers were excellent and it was very useful to hear them describe their own experiences with humour and emotion.

- I was very interested in the CEO study and very impressed with the CEO's ability to adapt to constructive leadership.

- I enjoyed the conference and thought the speakers were of a high quality.

- Thank you for a wonderful Conference in Melbourne last week. It was a great event and the client that I brought along found the event very helpful.

- Thank you and your team for a wonderful conference we and our clients thought it was fantastic.

- First of all well done and congratulations on the conference yesterday; would have to be in the best one or two yet!

- 1st class job last Friday in Perth. Dynamic impactful conference well done to you and team best I have experienced. So proud I had 10 people there from my new employer including my CEO ... well done.

- WOW! What a brilliant conference, the best yet! The intro was fantastic. Making LI Domains and the Circumplex outcomes was brilliant. The speakers top class and Peter Fuda's presentation outstanding.

5.2.   CEO INSTITUTE FEEDBACK – BRISBANE, JUNE 2010

Source: Feedback collected via post-event surveys

- I wish I could have more than just an hour with Peter! Wonderful to hear from a practitioner rather than an academic. Particularly a practitioner with academic rigor.

- Confirmation of some already held views on this subject. Useful in highlighting particularly around the Why as to how to move forward.

- Transformation is a journey, not a process of attempting instant change through "2 day off site with abseiling in the middle".

- What resonated was how CEOs can be truly authentic with clear intent. The reliance on the imperative, the "burning platform" to generate ownership in the journey. The importance of demonstrating vulnerability.

- Great to get 'real' insights – not theoretical models. Hero/Villain examples I found very relevant. Symbolic change will help me.

- Motivation clarity – formulate ideas/strategies already have into a sequence.

- Practical content to leadership based on real life experience, excellent. Brought life and to reality the challenge of leadership capability

- Incisive and clear presentation of concepts and thoughts

- A clear understanding of the potential for contemporary leadership to unlock the true potential of our organisation

- Was able to clearly identify the key drivers to success from the CEO experiences

- Peter uses very powerful language to explain his views on leadership success. Leadership transformation can happen to create very lasting improvements to an organisation.

- Understanding that transformational leadership is not formularised e.g. Increase change = triangle desire x models of transformation x defined steps

- Provokes introspection as to how I am perceived in my organisation

- Very practical insights. Liked the focus on "learnings" as opposed to academic text. Simple model/easily understood

- Got me thinking on some things I have been avoiding. I found it quite cathartic.

- I will revisit the Why in my journey

- I understand that my personal transformation is a journey but want to ensure the other senior leaders in my organisation (owner/ director included) start and continue their journey correctly.

- To ask the Why of my people before asking the inevitable question. To understand how to better "take off the mask"

- Ask 'why' more often of managers rather than just 'what' when discussing strategy.

- Get a commitment from chairman to company vision, purpose, values & beliefs as although not working in the company has a bigger impact than I previously thought.

- Focus more on the journey and the learnings rather than the plan or the strategy in itself. Critical importance of being authentic and (self awareness).

- Will certainly look to use symbols and metaphors more in my presentations to staff and clients. The concept of understanding what people want to 'feel' rather than what they want to know was a significant point for me.

- Focus more on strengths and importance of being authentic.

- To better understand that the right results can come from the key drivers and values within yourself as a leader – to continue to understand and change productivity is important.

- Become more dogged in pursuing leadership "style" change for organisational improvement.

- Express authenticity as the definition of personal values

- Think through my motives and re define my burning ambitions

- Banking organisations (you know) have challenges around the areas you mention. Accountability is the big buzz word. Everyone is accountable but in this context it boils down to authenticity

- Extremely impressive sharing of the CEO experiences and what works for leadership and organisational transformation.

- Very interesting, given me inspiration / motivation to continue the journey as I have embarked upon it.

- Very competent, polished and "authentic" presentation.

- The research based outcomes of your work are very sound and I can see significant relevance to my business

- Enjoyed the presentation and got a lot of value from it.

- Some thought provoking ideas are essential to improvement

- Case studies are the most powerful. I am also overweight (sic) with theory!

- Good presentation, highly engaging, plenty of good thought.

- I want to know a lot more!

5.3. CEO CIRCLE FEEDBACK – SYDNEY, JUNE 2010

Source: Feedback collected via post-event surveys

- As one of seven children who also grew up on a farm I felt a connection straight away. Paul (Timmins) shared how his journey has influenced all aspects of his life.

- A practical case study with many examples that are applicable to our own business. All in plain business speak and "uncliched"

- Authenticity of leaders, willingness to make decisions based on values not profits

- It was authentic against a measurable result. It was "true"

- Very pleased to see the success the company experienced from having positive culture. Interested to learn about how Paul's change occurred. Learnt the value of measuring the change for individuals

- An insight into a real life experience that has a mixture of local and global factors. Listening adds value to existing knowledge and provides an opportunity to compare and assess for future use.

- Refreshing to hear how others have many of the same experiences and trepidations upon accepting a new role.

- Excellent. I'm the chair of a NFP organisation and find myself putting on the mask. I will make changes.

- Great way to present. The CEO telling the story with Peter bringing the insights / reference to the business world. The use of an instrument as a baseline to measure change was great.

- Great framework for leadership style/development. I find a lot of my learning comes from stories of other people's challenges and how they have addressed them, and that is what Paul provided.

- It makes one realise how disparate experiences can benefit from one well researched approach

- Peter reinforced the value of asking 'why' to identify sustainable change / drive. The importance of authenticity and asking for help

- The absence of a formula or 'idea' is beneficial

- The "Fire" resonated extremely strongly. I believe that authenticity follows very closely behind.

- Look forward to reading your book! Excellent – music to my ears as a person with a HR background. Thank you.

- It is refreshing to see an executive be honest about their own failings and be prepared to undertake personal change in order to effect business change. It would be beneficial to have some more time on the seven metaphors of leadership transformation.

- Great combination of a model / findings from research and a personal story – thanks!

- A great, clear presentation. Very valuable. Thanks.

- Very interesting and engaging discussion. Would like to learn more.

- Contemporary and thought provoking. Real value adds.

6. APPENDIX F – DVD OF CEO PRESENTATIONS

6.1. DVD OF CEO PRESENTATIONS (FROM THE 11TH AUSTRALIAN CONFERENCE ON LEADERSHIP & CULTURE – SEPTEMBER 2009)

A DVD of CEO presentations from the 11th Australian Conference on Leadership & Culture has been included in your hard copy thesis pack. The DVD shows four CEOs from this study; Mike Shove, Jim Varghese, Clynton Bartholemeusz, and Paul Timmins talking about aspects of their leadership experiences live on stage.

The DVD also includes a presentation by Peter Fuda on his formative thoughts about the Seven Metaphors for Leadership Transformation.

The conferences were conducted in September 2009 in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth, and were attended by some 4,000 management practitioners.