





 Graduate School
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UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

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How might we enlarge our mental models to grow leadership with wisdom and compassion?

Address to Malawian and Zambian Chartered Accountancy Institutes'

Executive Retreat

Held in Malawi

On Monday 11 April 2022

Key invitations, points of discussion and questions to explore with esteemed colleagues attending the retreat

1. We, Africans seem unable to foster an original relationship with our lives, its problems, opportunities and possibilities.
2. Organisations, world over, lack leadership that is able to make them commit to their highest purpose (Leinwand, Mani, Sheppard, 2022)
3. To experience meaningful lives (personal and executive) it is important to develop an original relationship with our challenges, and opportunities for excellence. Why should we not?
4. We seem unable to affect the external conditions of our worlds which are changing at a faster pace than we can adjust our beliefs. Why has our resilience become lost?
5. To recover agency we must grow compassion and and wisdom.
6. To become wise, one needs to grow compassion for 'self' and 'other' – for the ends of clarifying what ends we are aiming for – what is purposeful, valuable, honorable and impactful?
7. '**Self**' and '**Other**' – '**I**' and '**We**' – are co-created, explained by the universal law of Ubuntu. I am because you are; you are because we are. How are we co-creating each other?
8. To define and redefine what is purposeful for self and other is leadership. To grow compassion and wisdom, to adjust beliefs, is leadership.
9. Leadership then amounts to creating faith in the integrity of common purpose, and personal aims for purpose. Leadership is a process in as much as it is a 'role' bestowed upon us.
10. Can I invite you to explore 2 journeys to enlarge your professional ethos and mental models, to lead with compassion and wisdom? Let's make a brief practical start.

How might we do this with this my esteemed audience?

**Questions for colleagues
in this audience,
who are often at
executive leadership level:**

*How might we bring a compassionate, wise,
leaderful assessment, to complement this view,
to foster an original authentic
relationship with
your worlds ?*

Professionals
with finely tuned
mental models to assess
performance and the health of
an entity's (private or public) capitals :
(1) financial, (2) manufactured,
(3) **intellectual**, (4) **human**,
social and (5) relationship,
and (6) natural.

Real stories of compassionate, wise leadership

- **Munya Nyama** – A Zambian executive, professionally qualified engineer, and Executive Director in an Asset Management Business
 - He understood that without compassion, personal leadership and wise engagement of his co-directors and other stakeholders he will not bring to life any investments that focussed on the environment, inequality or under-employment using his business platform.
 - He leveraged the many disharmonious, anomalous feelings and managed to engage stakeholders in the Zambian government, industry players and his own executive team to explore opportunities.
 - Recently he managed to invest in a large solar farm to make practical impact on Zambia's wish to bring clean energy to its neighbouring countries to grow opportunity to lead.



Real stories of compassionate, wise leadership

- **Satish Anthony** – A trained actuary who was trusted to lead strategy for his organization, the largest short-term insurer in South Africa.
 - He needed to enlarge his trained actuary mental model – of knowing the correct answers – and of making quick expedient decisions – and of being responsible to have all the answers.
 - Like Munya he had to grow comfortable with growing power-with others, to produce strategic directionality.
 - Working with leadership as a process.



Real - stories of compassionate, wise leadership

- **Johan Dekker** - MD of the South African operation of a logistics company listed on the New York Stock Exchange in 2014
 - The company employed more than 20,000 staff in hundreds of branches in more than 60 countries across the globe, with turnover > \$5 billion annually, placing it among the top 20 global logistics service providers.
 - The Company found itself under constant pressure due to nagging losses for a number of consecutive years and associated lacklustre share price performance.





Real - stories of compassionate, wise leadership

- Unmet shareholder and analyst expectations eventually led to the departure of the CEO in 2014 and a turnaround intervention by a new CEO.
 - A major restructuring and cost-cutting exercise followed in 2015 to exclusively focus on short-term financial performance.
 - Scorecards were re-balanced with an 80% weighting on financial performance in the first two quarters of FY16 (the 2016 financial year which started on 1 February 2015).
 - This resulted in intense pressure on the business units during 2015, which had to cope with handling the restructuring trauma, ensuring that the business units were “making the numbers” on a quarterly basis, and learning to adjust to the reduced resources in some areas.
- [The] business experienced a serious client escalation, which Johan could not respond to immediately and which was eventually handled by his manager.

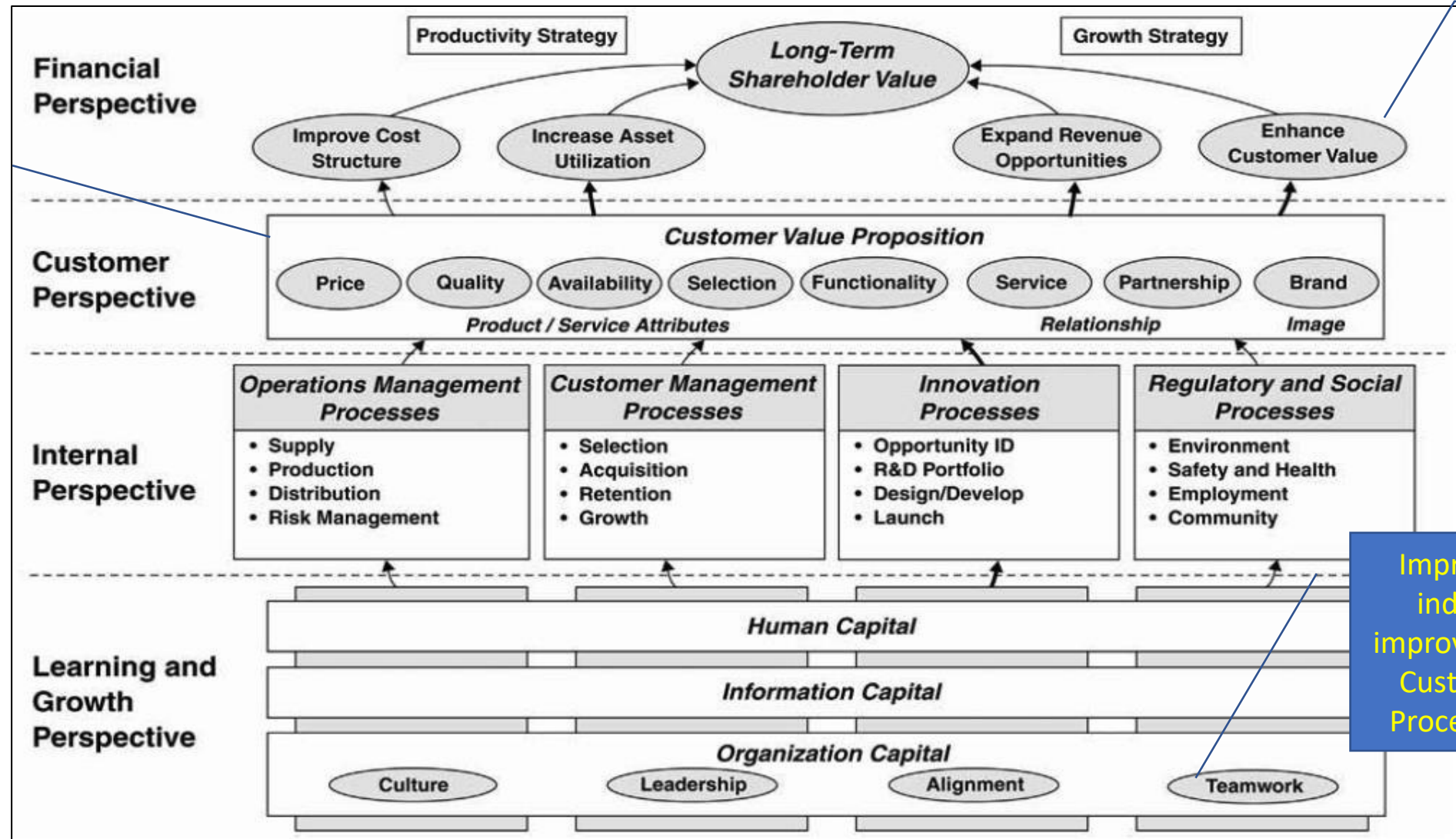


Real - stories of compassionate, wise leadership

- Johan reflects:
 - *“This was the “last straw” for my manager; he had held the view for some time that my approach was too strategic and long-term oriented for the business context.*
 - *“His view was that I was not in touch operationally and not decisive enough.*
 - *“He explained to me that the business was under severe pressure to reach its quarterly targets and that my approach needed to change – I needed to be more hands-on and tougher with my team from a performance expectation perspective. And I needed to change my approach, to focus more on the short-term and achieve our profitability and accounts receivable targets.*
 - *“My manager even told me that I would feel uncomfortable in this space*

(Dekker, Reflection, 16 July 2015)

Guide to aligning intangible assets

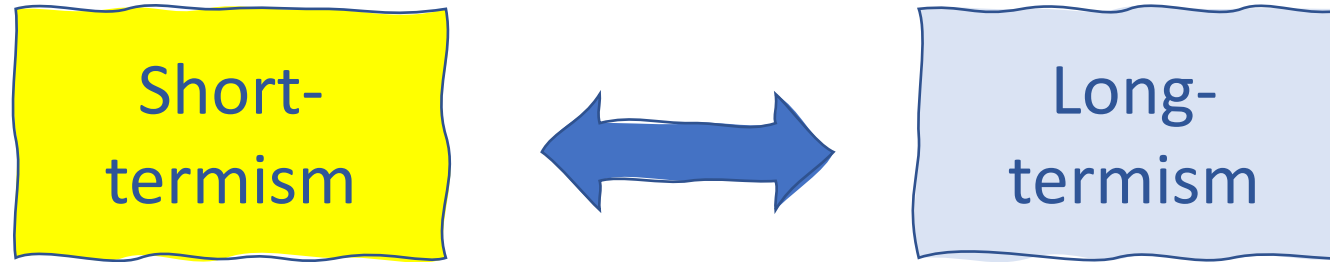


A lag indicator

A leading indicator of customer and financial outcomes

Improvements in these indicators show that improvements in Financial, Customer and Internal Processes are imminent

The apparent clash Johan faced



*Johan was in a low mood - of lots of internal noise.
He felt conflicted and needed to find orientation with this emotional
turmoil*

Embedding Long-Term Thinking in an Environment of Short-Termism : Investing in Intangibles for Sustainable Growth

What is the role of the leader in these kinds of clashes?

The good life

- For several early management scholars, management and leadership are activities in the service of a *good life*, in the context of the firm.
- In this context,
 - the job of a chief executive is to create “faith in the integrity of the common purpose” (Barnard, 1968: 259).
 - An exemplary chief executive is the “architect of purpose” (Andrews, 1980: 11), who ought to ensure that “the game is worth playing, the victory worth seeking, and life and career worth living”

How can the leader enlarge their mental models?

How did Munya, Satish and Johan enlarge their mental models?

*They needed to
adjust beliefs and values,
and find orientation with this internal
noise and conflict.*

*They had to learn how to understand the
'inner world' of emotion and mood
and see this as
needing their mastery.*

Key principles that help leaders enlarge their mental models

1. Disharmonies and internal noise is indicative of a values clash.
2. Moods are an assessment and concern about the future.
3. These signals need to be seen as an invitation to create newer worlds, choices and options.

How did Munya, Satish and Johan enlarge their mental models?

They needed to think using integrative thinking to assess, as professionals with mental models, the performance and the health of their entity's (private or public) capitals: financial, manufactured, intellectual, human, social and relationship, and natural

Key principles that help leaders enlarge their mental models

4. Resist 'lazy thinking' as expedient choice from existing options – give yourself time – Why should you not trust your ability to see this originally – work through vague emotions and ideas?
5. First-rate intelligence is to hold opposing ideas, options in memory and still retain the ability to function.
6. To create new options; you need access to your own thinking and the thinking of 'others' – empathy and compassion is required

*“The test of a first-rate intelligence is the **ability to hold two opposing ideas in mind at the same time** and still retain the ability to function. One should, for example, be able to see that things are hopeless yet to be determined to make them otherwise.”*

-F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Crack-up (1936)

“The ability to face constructively the tension of opposing models and instead of choosing one at the expense of the other, to generate a creative resolution of the tension in the form of a new model that contains elements of the individual models but is superior to each.”

- Roger Martin, The Opposable Mind, 2007, p. 15)

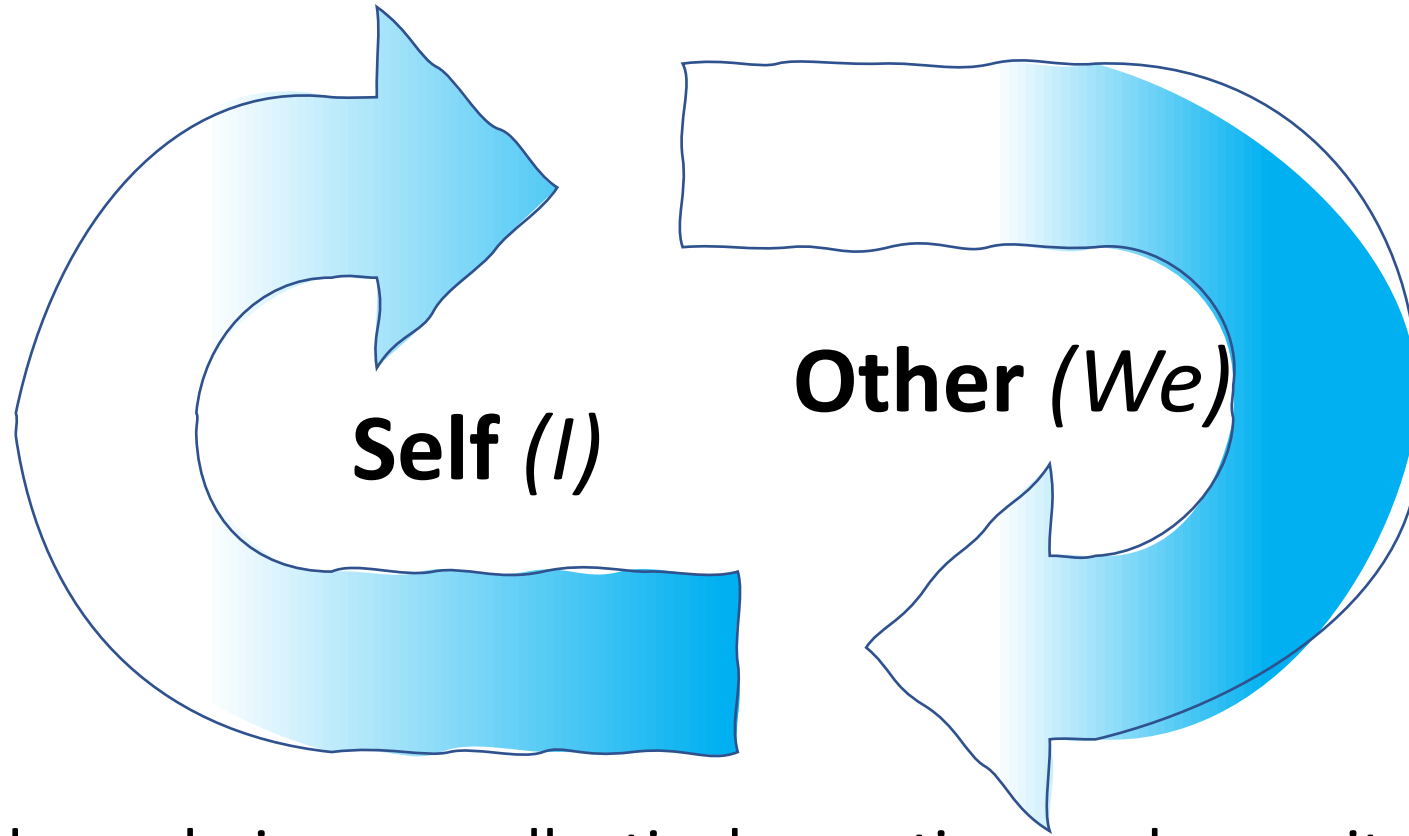
How might we attune our leadership towards more compassion?

Was Dr Reuel Khoza talking about something similar in his 2012 book, *Attuned Leadership*?

Despite the experience of “I” or “we”, there can be no “I” without “we”. Or “we” without “I”

“Collectivist consciousness” of ubuntu is a rationalist foundation for leadership.

Compassion



- My being and your being are collectively creating our humanity as moral beings.
- This is an elastic, emerging situation, that is malleable – This is the space of wisdom and compassion and the emergence of leadership.
- See leadership as process of changes in directionality of purpose, meaning, beliefs, for self and other

Why might wisdom and compassion – Ubuntu - be so fundamental to leadership ?

- To produce leadership is to change directionality in this ever-present elasticity of Ubuntu
 - As Dr Reuel Khoza explains in his book, *Attuned Leadership*, “it is the personhood that lends leadership its being” (p. 19). See this personhood emerging from the embodiment of these principles.
 - Dr Khoza suggests to be wise leaders we must arrive at self-prescribing the universal law of Ubuntu, to lead from within, rather from above; to “plumb the heart for its own motivations”, and in so doing build secure “consonance with [...] desires and disappointments [of self and others]. respecting their human worth”. whilst holding oneself. and others accountable to the highest moral possibility, to be responsible for, as Reuel Khoza-recollects was Nelson Mandela’s style. This was also the style of Munya, Satish and Johan
 - According to Khoza, Nelson Mandela sounded the depths of his own leadership to foster an original path for the African National Congress, South Africa and the ruling National Party. He sought to transformed himself first adjusting his values and beliefs and invited others along.

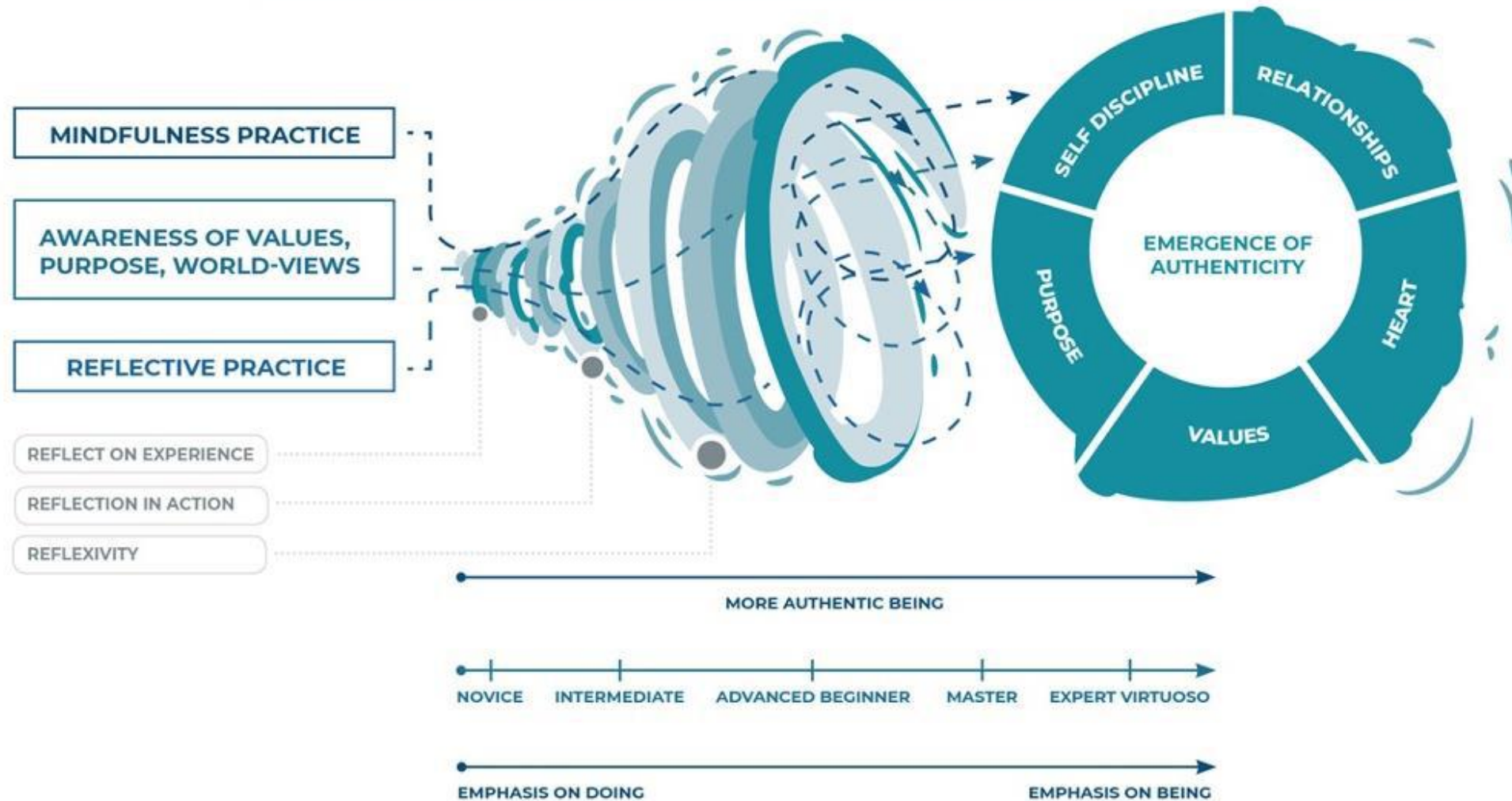
Recall my key invitations and questions to explore with this group of our esteemed colleagues

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How can we grow self-prescription to the principle of Ubuntu to hold each other accountable to our most ambitious purpose?

Afterall this is about compassion, wisdom and leadership

Journey 1: Can I access, and give expression to my sincerest wishes?



Sewchurran, K. (2022). *Sounding the Depths of Leadership*. Cape Town: Artistry in Everydayness.

Remember the good life

- For Aristotle (2002: 1140a25–28) a life is worth living when it aims at becoming a good life (eudaimonia), that is, when it enables people to flourish, providing them with the ability to fulfill their potential.
- Humans live a fulfilled life to the extent to which they function properly, able to look reflectively and see the accumulation of a good life.
- To pursue this one requires an attunement to what you value, what excellences (virtues) you need to sharpen. Most important is to understand how this arises for you. There is an opportunity for me to become more compassionate by...
- Typically, excellences relate to what we find difficult, such as compassion, indecision, improving bad moods, becoming more open. The clues for these emerge from our 'internal noise' and 'moods'..
- Human beings naturally care about what their lives are amounting to – What can propel a good life..?

Two kinds of virtue

Munya Nyama : “It is my view that thoughts have a profound effect on moods and moods affect further thoughts [...] I have learned that thoughts can easily be superseded by other thoughts and one would remain in a thought cul-de-sac.”

Virtues

Intellectual

Practical wisdom (*phronesis*)

- Processing moods
- Resisting choice when faced with undesirable choices.
- Making sense of ‘internal noise’ or resistant inclinations.

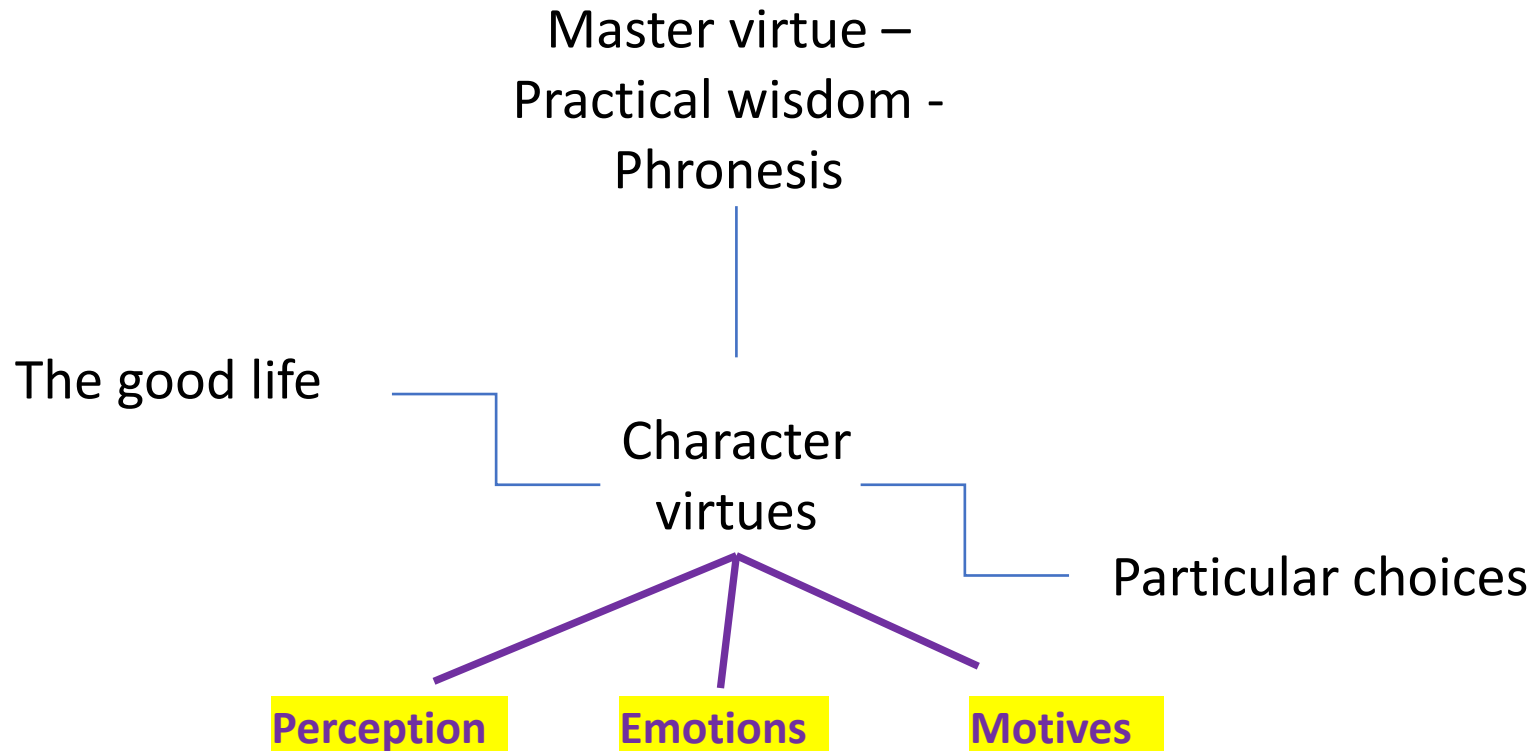
Moral

Generosity, courage, perseverance, compassion etc.

- What opportunities are there for you to grow this?
- How do they emerge for you?

“Some moments came, and I was completely present and learnt so much from that moment, and there were moments where I defaulted into old behaviours. This is one of those habits where I need to continue with. It allowed me not to be frazzled when our Group CEO was cross-questioning my slides during a presentation, instead of anticipating his next question or getting frustrated that the reason he is asking all these questions was due to my slides not flowing well. I saw it as an opportunity to stay present with him in his questions and engage him accordingly. The way I felt at that moment was that he was interested enough in my presentation to engage me in it. My mood is not just intentional but is also formed from the basis of how I choose to view this situation.”

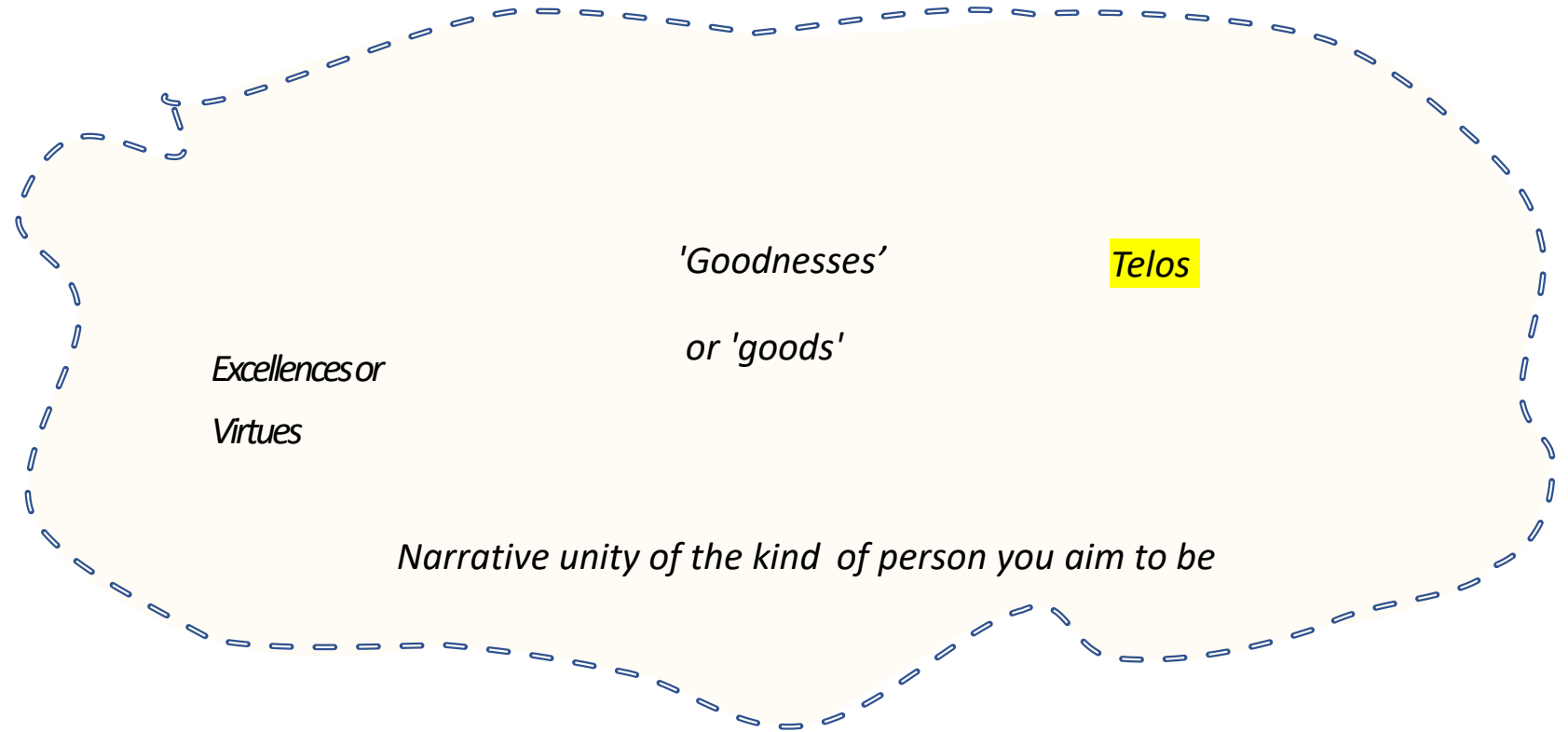
At a unit of experience level



Sewchurran, K. (2022). *Sounding the Depths of Leadership*. Cape Town: Artistry in Everydayness.

Tsoukas, H. (2018). Strategy and virtue: Developing strategy-as-practice through virtue ethics. *Strategic Organization*, 16(3), 323–351.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1476127017733142>

Journey 2: **Can I organize my desires and adjust my beliefs?**



Satish's expression of his telos : "I am a living example of compassion, joy, laughter, support and kindness. I do not expect from others what I do not expect of myself. I am grounded in choice, travel and rich experiences. I strive to grow as a son, a brother, a husband and a father. I create value."

Reabetswe Mosala : "I am an exemplary example of love and humility to my son, held by my faith"

Munya Nyama: My signature style is to be an "overcomer", being able to surf bad moods and disappointment to see the positives.

Summarizing



Grant, A. (2021). Experience. *Harvard Business Review*, 131.

- a) The life of the mind grows ever more detached from the direct experience of life, without compassionate leadership.
- b) People then don't have direct, active, original experiences of their lives, consequently they feel no meaningful connection with their lives to flourish, be resilient.
- c) As a consequence, the external conditions of our lives are changing at a faster pace than we are able to adjust their beliefs, values and predispositions.
- d) We are participant with unhelpful understandings acquired through the ages about; *self, thinking, action, world, management, leadership* and this affects a), b) and c).
- e) As a consequence, we are experiencing growing feelings of being lost and overwhelmed as more and more assured objects of belief lose their allure.
- f) My invitation is to foster genuine self-realisation, to adjust your beliefs, organise your pursuit of purpose – with compassion and spacing leadership
- g) Enlarge your mental models with these practices. [Organisations, world over, lack leadership that is able to make them commit to their highest purpose \(Leinwand, Mani, Sheppard, 2022\)](#)

Kosheek Sewchurran

Sounding the Depths of Leadership

Seven character development
voyages to foster authentic
leadership in the ongoing present

"A masterfully complete book that takes the reader on not just a theoretical, but also a practical journey into the mystery of what it means to be truly alive"

- JANINE AHLERS, IntegralCoach®, Academic Director Center for Coaching,
University of Cape Town, Graduate School of Business

I believe it is sufficient to qualify the book as epoch-making, since it is an intensely practical book grounded in philosophy - Aristotle, Martin Heidegger, and John Dewey" - **Professor Howard Richards, Research Professor of Philosophy, Earlham College**

"Kosheek shares his remarkable journey of determination, resilience, learning and relearning with poignant authenticity, making this one of the most compelling books written on leadership development in recent times. Mastering the artistry of everydayness in executive life is invaluable and I am confident that this book will be indispensable to all executives as we aim for creativity and more learning on the edge of our new reimagined world." - **Distinguished Professor of Bioethics and Director: Centre for Medical Ethics & Law, Department of Medicine, Faculty of Health Sciences, Stellenbosch University**

This book's lessons "carved as Navigation Charts to help us steer a purposeful path, will help any manager in any sector learn how to manifest resilience in the face of their everpresent volatile environments." - **Professor Joseph Raelin, Principle - Leaderful Consultancy, Visiting Professor of Leadership, Graduate School of Business, University of Cape Town.**

A new, fresh, and meaningful worldview on what leadership is, and foremost, how to develop that leadership existence. A profound rethinking of leadership itself. In my opinion, in this book, the analysis of what leadership is (and isn't) is truly refreshing, but above all, very meaningful." - **Emeritus Prof Walter Baets, Professor of Complexity and Values Based Leadership, Graduate School of Business, University of Cape Town.**

This book is written for those with a yearning to grow leadership excellence for the joint pursuit of purpose, goodness, impact and joyful living. Potential readers are people with this yearning, in leadership role responsibility, or coaches working with leadership development who want to know how to organise and cohere such journeys and aims.

The wish for this book is to make leadership practice, in the ongoing present, intelligible from within, to let this experience awaken the learning of leadership - and remaking of it. To give structure to this transformative, unfolding learning journey, the book offers navigation charts to explore seven distinct character development systems. This inquiry process accrues into Sounding the Depths of Leadership, as a practically experienced process of inquiring into, and building and cohering character virtues and values to keep sharpening the integrative aim for goodness, purpose, joy and excellence. The book's distinct offering is that it offers a practical philosophy to make this lived experience of leadership more intelligible.