

Leading with the Golden Touch

Our modern organizations evolve as the marketplace and societies evolve around them. Political, environmental, and economic factors drive these changes in certain directions. Typically, organizations not only adapt to these changes but initiate them too. Adaptation can be achieved “passively” by merely reacting to external stimulus or “actively” by truly embracing changing circumstances to maximum benefit. Historically, we are aware of many of these changes, the industrial age, the innovation age, the age of the knowledge worker, or the creative age. The team at ‘Innovative Leadership Solutions’ utilizes the most recent literature and research, provides an overview of the findings, the circumstances that surround the modern manager and aspiring leader, and form a foundation on which new knowledge is created and can be practiced. The goal is to achieve familiarity with the cutting edge of technology and science, and to prepare new ideas and concepts needed to master the future.

One of the new concepts from ‘Innovative Leadership Solutions is ‘**Leading with the Golden Touch**’. “The Golden Touch” is not a myth but the highly successful leader’s ability to realize that leading will require a keen understanding of reality and the benefits this reality holds. Learning to create conditions, not just react to them, to become successful utilizing the driving factors of the global marketplace, of relationships and of innovation. The future will require us to work smarter, to be open and flexible.

This future will be flat from a point of view of opportunity for all or spiky when it comes to valleys and mountains of creativity. It will be demanding when one tries to be financially and economically successful in an environment of more players and equality in access to information.

Therefore, to start out, it is helpful to find our place. Albert Einstein stated, “A human being is part of the whole called by us universe, a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings as something separate from the rest, a

kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.”¹

Our task must be to see the world as a whole, as a set of inter-connected systems. We have lost the understanding of inter-connection, even as the world has become smaller and more readily present in our own businesses and living rooms.

When looking at what we are passionate about and spend a lot of time with, we find that work takes a large space in our lives. In the Western economies, it has become more and more obvious that this work is no longer the vocation of the industrial age. We no longer need to labor in the production of material goods for the majority of our lives to sustain our families and ourselves. Organizations have evolved.

Peter Drucker stated, “It is a sound structural principle to have the fewest number of layers, that is, to have an organization that is as “flat” as possible – if only because the first law of information theory tells us that “every relay doubles the noise and cuts the message in half.”² In the last two decades, many organizations have adopted parts of this claim by creating teams. Whenever there is an issue to discuss or a problem to solve we create a team or “focus group”, we have a meeting, and appoint a team leader, with the hopes of successfully achieving a goal or obtaining a solution. Childre states, “Teams that are entrained function smoothly, capitalizing on the creativity and intelligence of the individual members with minimal distortion or static.”³ With entrainment as resonance, in which a team is in the “swing of things”, creativity is almost touchable and problems are solved independent of the amount of time or money allocated to a problem we are looking to provide.

When asked to cite factors that would account for the success of a team, interviewees consistently said it was imperative to select the right people.⁴ So who are the right people? What is the right frame of mind? What are the personal skills needed? The right people are not the ones that know about all aspects of the project or problem. They are the knowledgeable workers in their field or their part of the organization. They work from integrity.

‘Innovative Leadership Solutions’ takes the meaning of integrity from Dr. David Hawkins (1995) *Power vs. Force*. Integrity represents a “critical line that distinguishes the positive and negative influences of life. At the level of integrity, true power occurs.”

⁵ Power energizes supplies and supports. Power gives life and energy – force (below integrity) takes these away.⁶

The year 2005 was riddled with natural disasters. Political and organizational leaders were frequently required to form teams to address these natural disasters. We have all witnessed that the level, the income, or the position of a person as a member of a team does not determine his/her importance. This became especially clear through the role of the weather forecasters in the Gulf of Mexico when trying to support the politicians and emergency responders in their preparations for one storm after another. What success or failure, preparedness or surprise, will be experienced depends on the level of trust that exists in the relationship of the team members. Trust is one of those mainstay virtues in the commerce of humankind. It is the bond that enables any kind of significant relationship to exist between people. Once broken, it is not easily – if ever - recovered. Trust is produced in a climate that is based in integrity and includes four elements and four practices of leadership:

Elements

1. Honesty – integrity, no lies, no exaggerations
2. Openness – a willingness to share, and a receptivity to information, perceptions, ideas
3. Consistency – predictable behavior and responses
4. Respect – treating people with dignity and fairness.⁷

Practices

1. Lead with questions, not answers
2. Engage in dialogue and debate, not coercion
3. Conduct autopsies without blame
4. Build red-flag mechanisms that turn information into information that cannot be ignored.”⁸

Yes, leadership is about vision. But leadership is equally about creating a climate where the truth is heard and the brutal facts confronted.”⁹ The team at ‘Innovative

Leadership Solutions offers this opportunity through the development of strong reality testing.

The authors have adopted the definition of Joseph Rost for the term leadership: “Leadership is an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes.”¹⁰

Transferability is always an issue when looking at a subject, study, review, or article. With our minds focused on the issue of relationships in organizations and especially in teams, what do we need to do if we want to apply the **Golden Touch** of leadership to our team, group, or company? One of the important issues is to find out how well the individual pieces in our organization fit together. This fit can also be described as the coherence a leader can observe and influence in her or his environment.

Childre, et. al. is very clear about the value of coherence: “Organizations are the sum total of the intelligence, creativity, self-management, and coherence of their people. As coherence increases within individuals and teams, a much higher level of organizational coherence and alignment is possible - coherence between the organization’s mission, its vision, its strategies and its actions.

Coherence is *consistency* between customer expectations and customer satisfaction. Coherence is *continuity* in every internal process and communication modality. Coherence is *balance* within the personal life of each stakeholder in the process. The increased chaos in the entire world’s system requires a highly flexible, adaptive, intelligent response. Coherence is the energy-efficient modality in a chaotic world.”¹¹ How do we achieve this coherence?

We need to apply the **Golden Touch** of leading if we are to create the environment and relationships required to achieve the highest possible levels of coherence. “Intentions are most powerful when they are positive and creative. Merely wanting bad things to stop is not enough. You must intend something new to replace the old.”¹² This assumes that we have the intention or the need to make a change. Creating coherence, trusting relationships within our organizations, and in turn an environment that allows for the free flow of creativity, all revolves around the people. “Whether someone is the “right person” has more to do with character traits and innate capabilities than with specific knowledge, background, or skill.”¹³

As Peter Drucker said, “The relationship is far more like that between the conductor of an orchestra and the people who play the instruments. The conductor may not even know how to play a violin, yet the success of his conducting depends upon the quality of his associates. In addition, just as an orchestra can sabotage even the ablest conductor – especially the most autocratic one – a knowledge organization can easily sabotage even the ablest, especially the most autocratic, superior.”¹⁴ Does that mean leading is making suggestions and hoping they will be followed? Not at all. What it means is that leading is becoming a more complex and sensitive subject. No longer can we just measure by the number of gadgets someone produced in a given amount of time, or the amount of faxes, emails, and phone calls someone sent, made and received.

Leading with the Golden Touch means creating a specific environment, developing and cherishing relationships, and giving clear, unambiguous guidance. It especially requires being aware why followers come to work in one organization and not the other. In the creative age we are living in the workforce is motivated much like volunteers. Volunteers, we know, have to get more satisfaction from their work than paid employees precisely because they do not get a paycheck. They need, above all, challenge. They need to know the organizations mission and to believe in it. They need continuous training. They need to be treated like partners. Partners need persuasion rather than orders.¹⁵

This general idea is much in line with part of the concept practiced at 3M for several years now. People can go on sabbaticals or participate in training outside of the organization. They can make proposals to pursue ideas that have nothing to do with the current line of products or services. All this in hopes of finding new, innovative products that will keep the offerings the organization has for its customers fresh and competitive. It has been said that this is a concept of ‘luck of innovation’. Similar aspects can be found in start up companies, especially in creative areas like information technology and services. Here the dress code is removed, the rigid times for start and end of work hours and even the place of work have been removed in lieu of the freedom to create. In these “flexible” organizations the challenge for leaders is even greater! “The highest order of creative work is producing new forms or designs that are readily transferable and widely

useful.”¹⁶ Managers and those who try to help them too often rely on narrow models that capture only part of the realities of organizational life.¹⁷

Talking about the selection of the right people in a team or for an organization in a leading role, Jim Collins explains in one of his lectures: “As you watch organizations develop, sometimes what happens is, that as the organizations grows, and the bus gets larger and goes faster, the seats get bigger and more difficult. At some point, somebody that had the capability to hold a particular seat on the bus it outgrows them and they can no longer fulfill the responsibility of that seat. It happens in entrepreneurial growth. There are people that were perfect when the bus was a little, tiny minivan and when it becomes a big greyhound bus going down the road the seat is too big for them.”¹⁸

With this realization come hard decisions. The **Golden Touch** not only has its importance in the *creation* of the relationships within the organization, its structure, and its teams but also plays a vital role in the *development* from a small to large organization.

This means all members have to grow in personality, experience, and knowledge. At the same time, it might become necessary to exchange people in their position on the proverbial bus or even ask them to leave the bus for the better of the whole. This has to happen in a sensible, fair and ethical way. “Because many ethical issues in organizations are ambiguous, social cues regarding their nature become particularly important to the cognitive encoding process. These cues can focus attention toward or away from the moral nature of an issue.”¹⁹

One of the coping mechanisms that have been seen, especially in small and mid- size companies, are to keep things the same. This includes the procedures that were applied when the organization had only a handful of members. It is hard to surround oneself with people that are significantly different in many ways from oneself, especially from the leader’s point of view. Margaret Wheatley eloquently stated, “Stability is found in freedom – not in conformity and compliance. We may have thought that our organization’s survival was guaranteed by finding the right form and insisting that everyone fits into it. But, sameness is not stability. It is individual freedom that creates stable systems. It is different ness that enables us to survive.”²⁰ The need for change in the innovation age comes from two poles at the same time. On the one hand, we need change to adapt our organizations and the workforce to the changes in the environment in

which we try to compete. At the same time we need the change that allows the individuals to be innovative, work productively in teams, and help us transition from the known processes of industrial age production into the times of global cooperation that allows modern organizations to stay competitive. To tackle the second one of these types of change we will need to become perceptive about how to build relationships and how to nurture growing, evolving things.

All of us need better skills in listening, communication, and facilitating groups, because these are the talents that build strong relationships. It is well known that the era of the rugged individual has been replaced by the era of the team player. However, this is only the beginning. “²¹

So how does one do it? Warren Bennis said leaders must create an environment that embraces change, not as a threat but as an opportunity.”²² When we look at the role of the leader in the process of the change, we agree with Max DePree when he states, “The first responsibility of a leader is to define reality. The last is to say thank you. In between, the leader is a servant”²³ In our traditional way of thinking, “servant leadership”: sounds like an oxymoron. However, in a world of relationships, where relatedness is the organizing principle of the universe, it makes perfect sense.²⁴ How is a leader a good servant some readers might ask? We tend to attribute leaders as especially successful when they are long remembered by their employees or constituents for the things they helped to achieve. The excellent leaders are very tough on principles, not on people. Moreover, these leaders made sure that there were real consequences if the principles were violated. After all, no consequences means no standards – which translates into very little leadership²⁵ While the preservation of principles is of high importance for the climate of the organization, the apportionment of praise has equally high value. Jim Collins tells us that level five leaders look out the window to apportion credit to factors outside themselves when things go well (and if they cannot find a specific person or event to give credit to, they credit good luck). At the same time, they look in the mirror to apportion responsibility, never blaming bad luck when things go poorly²⁶

This reflection on the role and responsibility of the leader leads us to terms like climate, culture, and environment as important factors to solve problems, and having success in the innovation age. The concept of the holding environment, as discussed by

Heifetz in *Leadership without Easy Answers*, relates directly to the concept of holding a field. Heifetz's stresses the importance of respect, trust and admiration as a function of authority and as a key to creating a strong holding environment²⁷

Leading with the Golden Touch is a concept that combines the lessons learned from leadership research and literature with the newest scientific findings about the nature of human conscience.

Evidence now supports the perspective that a subtle yet influential electromagnetic or energetic communication system operates just below our conscious level of awareness. There is now data suggesting that there is an energetic system that contributes to the "magnetic" attractors or repulsions that occur between individuals²⁸

The same research offers evidence that supports the conclusion "that the nervous system acts as an antenna, which is tuned to and responds to the magnetic fields produced by the hearts of other individuals. From an electrophysiological perspective, it appears that sensitivity to this form of energetic communications between individuals is related to the ability to be emotionally and physiologically coherent. The data indicates that when individuals are in the coherent mode, they are more sensitive to receiving information contained in the fields generated by others. In addition, during physiological coherence internal systems are more stable, function more efficiently, and radiate electromagnetic fields containing a more coherent structure. Once individuals learn this skill, it is a common experience that they become much more attuned to other people and are able to detect and understand the deeper meaning behind spoken words. They are often able to sense what someone else really wishes to communicate even when the other person may not be clear about that which he is attempting to say.

Intuitive Listening helps people to feel fully heard and promotes greater rapport and empathy between people.²⁹ On similar scientific research in this area Sheldrake, (2004) offers this summary of M-fields, "This hypothesis of morphic fields points to an understanding of mind, which no longer needs to be seen as confined to the inside of the head." "Just as magnetic fields extend beyond the surface of a magnet, and electromagnetic fields beyond a cell phone, so the mind extends beyond the brain through mental fields" (Sheldrake, 2004:31) "Morphic fields are located within and around the systems they organize. Like quantum fields, they work probabilistically. They restrict,

or impose order upon, the inherent indeterminism of the system under their influence.” (Sheldrake, 2004:28) “Morphic fields contain a kind of memory. Through repetition, the patterns they organize become increasingly probable, increasingly habitual. The force these fields exert is the force of habit³⁰

The **Golden Touch** concept offers participants of an organization the opportunity to connect with the fields they have and the fields other’s have. Through exercises, it becomes possible to reach a new awareness that is instrumental in solving problems, being innovative and achieving success. Hawkins, one of the leading researchers in this field states, “Our research on attractor patterns correlates closely with the conclusions arrived at by Thomas Peters and Robert Waterman in their book *In Search of Excellence*. They concluded that successful companies were those that had “heart” as opposed to strictly left-brain, scientifically managed companies³¹

When the lessons and principles of **Leading with the Golden Touch** are applied by leaders and their followers, organizations can be transformed and readied for the challenges of the innovation and the 21st Century we live in.

Components of an Organization that applies the **Golden Touch:**

1. Integrated, integrity based leadership at all levels.
2. Clear understanding of mission/vision/market position with this position well above the level of integrity. A position of true power.
3. Clear understanding that actions have reactions and consequences. That what is done to/by one-part can affect others or the whole. Separateness is an illusion, internally and externally.
4. Employees are hired based not only on skills but also on alignment with organizational intentions and level of integrity. This facilitates “teams of individuals”.
5. The organization functions to support its employees and suppliers as well as its customers. Value is place on coherence and peaceful communication. Realization that frantic activity is largely non-productive – and value individual coherence as a primary marker of organizational coherence.

6. The company adapts to and maintains attitudes inline with high-energy attractor patterns, being pulled by their chosen future, their vision.
7. Scenario Planning is used to vector to the desired future. This allows for group input and ownership, further strengthening the field and the group as a whole.
8. Creating a Chief Vision Officer (CVO) to guide direction, maintain integrity of tasks to intentions, monitor thinking errors of group, spread highest thought process/preferred options and identify any aberration of stated intention before significant negative consequences are created. The CVO would be the primary person to maintain the field and manage the environment of the organization. This person would also have to be non-judgmental and able to hold emotion of organization, especially anxiety, without falling into the illusion of the fear.
9. The organization operates out of core values such as optimism and expectation of good with the development of high levels of emotional intelligence.

The team at Innovative Leadership Solutions is offering the concepts of **Leading with the Golden Touch** as experiential as well as educational options to its consulting clients. While founded upon many of the most accepted principles of leadership, organizational change, and management, this new approach is poised to prove itself in practical application across the organizations and the globe.

“The history of acceptance of new theories frequently shows the following steps: At first the new idea is treated as pure nonsense, not worth looking at. Then comes a time when a multitude of contradictory objections are raised, such as the new theory is too fancy, or merely a new terminology; it is not fruitful, or simply wrong. Finally, a state is reached when everyone seems to claim that he had always followed this theory. This usually marks the last state before general acceptance.”³²

¹ Albert Einstein as quoted in Wilber, 2000, p.136

² Peter Drucker, Forbes Magazin, 1998, issue 7, pages 152-177, 'Management's new paradigms'

³ (Childre, et al., 2004, p. 13)

⁴ Larson, LaFasto, 1989, Teamwork, p. 59

⁵ Hawkins, 1995, page 84

⁶ Hawkins, 1995, Page 132 – 133

⁷ Larson, LaFasto, 1989, Teamwork, p. 85

⁸ Collins, 2001, Good to Great, p. 88)

⁹ Collins, 2001, Good to Great, p. 74)

¹⁰ Rost , 1991, Leadership in the twenty-first century, p. 102)

¹¹ Childre, et al., 2004, p. 12

¹² Chopra, 2005:20-21

¹³ Collins, 2001, Good to Great, p. 64)

¹⁴ Peter Drucker, Forbes Magazin, 1998, issue 7, pages 152-177, 'Management's new paradigms'

¹⁵ Peter Drucker, Forbes Magazin, 1998, issue 7, pages 152-177, 'Management's new paradigms'

¹⁶ Richard Florida, 2002, The rise of the creative class, p.69

¹⁷ Bolman and Deal, 2003:18

¹⁸ Jim Collins, Lecture series, 2004

¹⁹ Butterfield, 2000:989

²⁰ Wheatley, 1999:41

²¹ Wheatley, 1993:38

²² Bennis, 1995

²³ .DePree, 1989

²⁴ Jaworski, 1998, p55

²⁵ .Larson, LaFasto, 1989, p. 124

²⁶ Collins, 2001, p. 35

²⁷ Heifetz, 1994:101

²⁸ .McCarty, 2003:7

²⁹ McCarty, 2003: 8-12

³⁰ .Sheldrake, 2004:28

³¹ Hawkins, 1995:164

³² Lewin, 1951, p43

NJP Note 1 – not wishing to be critical but ! One quote is “King Midas and The Golden Touch” (could the use of “The Golden Touch” be explained without reference to The Midas Touch?

For example:– “The Golden Touch” is not a myth but the highly successful leader’s ability to realize that leading will require a keen understanding of reality and the benefits this reality holds.

For your amusement – search engine gives for “Golden Touch” – a New York transportation site, Cameron Mackintosh, and a blackjack training course !!

NJP Note 2 – would it be an idea to expand on “working smarter” somewhere in this paper. Or could it be the subject of another paper.

NJP Note 3 – I was a little confused in this section:-

“The Golden Touch is not only applicable when it comes to forming the vision, mission, strategies, and goals for the organization. ³²

It not only has its importance in the creation of the relationships within the organization, its structure, and its teams. It also plays a vital role in the development from small to large.

This looks like a “not only but also” statement. Could the ³² quote perhaps be dropped and your text used for example:-

The Golden Touch not only has its importance in the *creation* of the relationships within the organization, its structure, and its teams but it also plays a vital role in the *development* from small to large.

NJP Note 4 – this looks like a “listing” of different types of people – leaders, management and board members. I do not think you mean that. The “Golden Touch” is for ALL leaders from top to bottom i.e. chairman/president, board etc to work team.

NJP Note 5 – maybe it is me but I was not too sure what is meant by “above the level of integrity”.

NJP Note 6 – could you put more “positive spin” on this? Instead of “will have to prove itself” could you (with integrity) state “ is poised to prove itself” ?