

[Integral Leadership](#)

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1... Summary

The call for leaders to respond to the challenge of "tough times" is also the call to look at what is really going on in the organisations they are leading. When all the outer circumstances seem to conspire to make life, and in particular our economic life, tough we need to see whether we have created "inner " realities that sustain us.

This paper and presentation will suggest that the development of "integral leadership" i.e. leadership that seeks to develop sustainable processes and authentic relationships to support the achievement of our commercial tasks, is one way ahead.

The paper will draw on the practice of integral leadership in the Findhorn Foundation, an internationally renowned community in Scotland, where the past 40 years has witnessed both outstanding economic success, and the development of a model human settlement designed to address the most pressing needs of our times.

Finally, the paper will present a challenging hypothesis – that the practice of integral leadership will lead, inevitably, to a re-examination of the organisation's primary purpose and orientation, and will pave the way towards the creation of workplaces that understand, value and make space for the manifestation of the soul at work. This, in turn, will help to make the workplace creative, inspiring, flexible and effective, and enable us to face "tough times" with confidence and optimism.

2...Background

Near to Findhorn, a traditional fishing village in northern Scotland, located at the point of meeting of the Moray Firth and Findhorn Bay, a quiet experiment has been underway for the past 40 years.

This experiment, started by Peter and Eileen Caddy and their friend, Dorothy MacLean, and aided and abetted by 3 children and the confines of an old caravan, was one of co-creation. Co-creating a life based on co-operation between the human, natural and spiritual realms.

This experiment led initially to the evolution of an 'unintentional' community and now to the creation of an ecovillage - a model for sustainable human settlements based on ecological, economic, social, cultural and spiritual criteria. Starting from nothing except one old caravan, and much faith and positive thinking, the community now has some £4 million worth of assets,

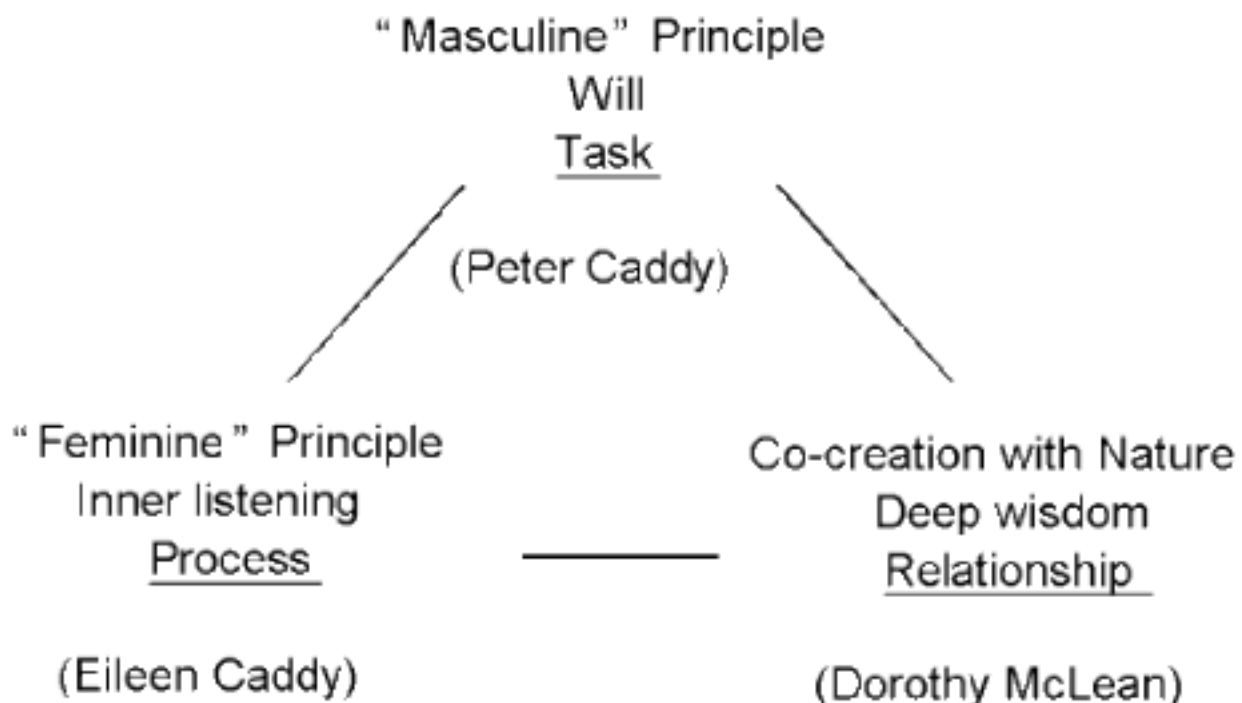
150 staff, and is supported and surrounded by a wider community of some 400-500. It is visited by over 14,000 guests each year, a significant proportion of whom take part in residential workshops. In 1998, the Foundation's ecovillage project was accorded NGO status with the UN where it contributes to dialogues about sustainability, values and spirituality. It has been awarded Best Practice stated in the UN's Habitat ...

Key to all of this development has been the practice of Integral Leadership, as embodied and exemplified by the three founders, Peter Caddy, Eileen Caddy and Dorothy McLean.

3...Integral Leadership – three principals and three principles

While Peter was a man of action and will, of strong intuitive sense, never hesitating to act on what he knew to be right, his wife Eileen was a meditator, someone who listened within and shared with Peter and the community the advice and guidance she received. They were complemented in these pioneering days, by their friend, Dorothy McLean, whose expertise lay in understanding nature's innate intelligence and acting in ways that acknowledged and enhanced this.

Diagrammatically, these three principles, of the application of will, the practice of inner listening, and harnessing the deep wisdom of working in ways that are derived from nature and natural systems are represented in Fig. 1



From this, we can see that not only does integral leadership require a balance between the "masculine", outwardly focussed will; the more receptive, "feminine" inner listening; and working with, not against, nature; but that these three "archetypes" can be translated into a more organisational language by focussing on the need to balance three aspects in

any business endeavour:

- **Task**
- **Process**
- **Relationship**

It is to these we now turn.

<u>TASK</u>	<u>PROCESS</u>	<u>RELATIONSHIP</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Vision	<input type="checkbox"/> Decision-making	<input type="checkbox"/> Membership
<input type="checkbox"/> Purpose	<input type="checkbox"/> Meeting methods	<input type="checkbox"/> Group dynamics
<input type="checkbox"/> Product	<input type="checkbox"/> Communication	<input type="checkbox"/> Conflict facilitation
<input type="checkbox"/> Goals	<input type="checkbox"/> Supervision	<input type="checkbox"/> Networks
<input type="checkbox"/> Strategy	<input type="checkbox"/> Feedback loops	<input type="checkbox"/> Environment

Model of Integral Leadership - Fig 2

Task

Of the three aspects of integral leadership, task is probably the one we know most about. We are familiar with leadership that focuses attention and energy on the achievement of the task - on clarifying the vision and purpose of the organisation, on developing the best quality product at the most competitive price, on creating and reviewing goals and targets, and on developing strategies for all levels of the business. This is invaluable. But on its own it is not enough. And this becomes particularly, and painfully, obvious when the economic circumstances around the business become challenging and difficult. At such times, we see the need to pay attention to the processes that are used within the organisation, and to the quality of relationships (both internal and external) that are being developed.

Process

A leader who pays attention to the process will be interested in answering questions like these:

- *Decision-making*: are the right people making the right kind of decisions, and how are they made? Are decisions made according to clear criteria? Do staff feel involved? Is their contribution welcomed and valued? How are decisions communicated?

- *Meeting methods*: how are meetings conducted? Are they well facilitated? Do they maximise the contributions of all those present? Do they

create or sap energy? Are the "hidden agendas" spoken to? Are the views of the shy or introverted sought out? Can everyone speak freely?

- *Communication*: How is information communicated through the organisation? Do staff feel informed and up to date? Does everyone have the information they need to do their job effectively? Are the communication needs of minority groups taken into account? Does the organisation generally feel "transparent" or "secretive"?

- *Supervision*: How are staff supported, and supervised, in their work? Do staff feel valued through the provision of regular supervision?

- *Feedback loops*: Can everyone contribute their thoughts and feelings about what is happening in the organisation, and how it is being led and managed? Are managers skilled in giving clear and helpful feedback to staff about their work? Are staff free to offer constructive feedback to their managers? What systems and structures are in place to facilitate open, clear 360 degree feedback?

If these feel like utopian, "pie in the sky" questions and suggestions, the question to today's leaders is, "Can you do without them?" In tough times, in times when our macroeconomic systems are under threat as never before, and when the ethical base of our most fundamental economic institutions is being challenged as never before, can you afford not to pay attention to such questions of "due process"?

Indeed, it could be argued that it is the lack of such attention that has created the "tough times" in the first place. To take one example, would the corruption in Enron have been allowed to flourish if such processes had been attended to?

And lastly, to the question of:

Relationships

The development of high quality relationships, both within and without the organisation, will serve both to make the workplace a place of enjoyment and nourishment, and to enable the organisation to be sustained through "tough times" through the morale, motivation and good heart of its staff.

- *Membership*: Is it clear what are the respective roles of advisors, the Board, non-executive directors, shareholders, and staff? Clear boundaries and well-delineated roles and responsibilities are key to the development of healthy and productive relationships.

- *Group Dynamics*: How does the group function? Does the group leader or facilitator pay attention to issues of power, roles, gender etc.? Are they able and willing to look at the issues below the surface, the things that everyone knows and gossips about but no one dares to voice?

- *Conflict facilitation*: Where there are conflicts between people in a team or within the wider organisation, are these aired openly, seen as inevitable and healthy, and facilitated in such a way as to turn them into creative opportunities for learning and growth? Or are they seen as signs of failure and inadequacy, difficult and disturbing, and ignored or brushed under

the carpet?

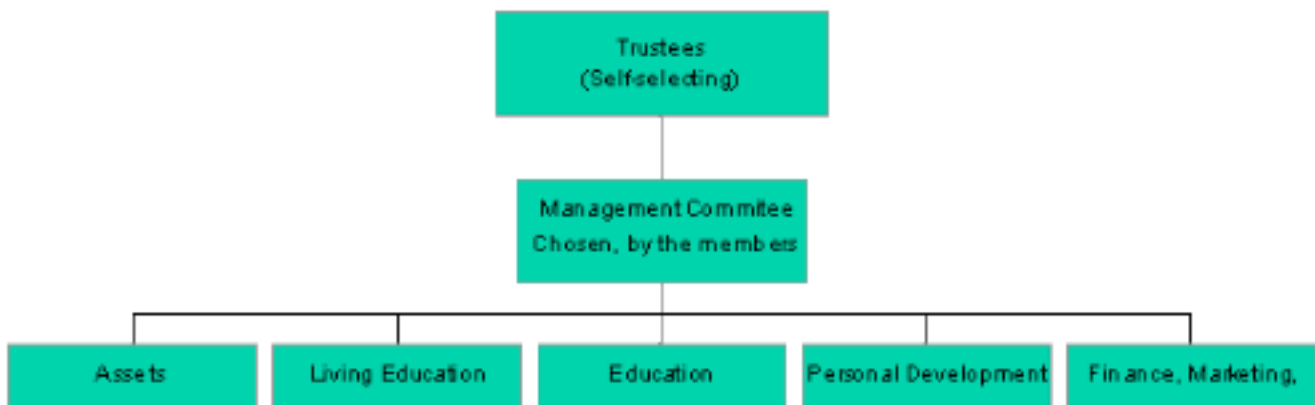
- *Networks*: What types of networks are being developed inside and outside the organisation? Are they founded on the desire for gain and a competitive mindset, or are they founded on goodwill and collaboration? How much trust underpins these networks and how can this be developed and enhanced?
- *Environment*: Does the business seek to work in ways that protect and support the natural environment that sustains it? Is the environment valued as a fragile and vital living entity, or rather as a resource to be used and exploited? Do we relate to the environment as stewards and caretakers, or as people passing through who will take as much as we can? Are we aware of the environmental crisis we are in?

The willingness to face such questions is one of the many facets of integral leadership. The leader does not need to answer them all, and certainly not at once. Her/his responsibility is to take the lead in creating an organisational culture where such questions are alive, where staff can seek and practice the answers, and where the organisation is seen as a living classroom rather than a ossified factory.

Now, let's take a look at one example of this, and at the structures and principles that underpin the practice of integral leadership in the Findhorn Foundation.

4...Structure

The Findhorn Foundation's organisational structure is quite common and traditional.



(Organisational Structure of the Findhorn Foundation - Fig. 3)

As a charity it is formally run by a self-selecting Board of Trustees who delegates the day-to-day running of the business to the Management Committee.

What may be less common are some of the principles that underlie the structures. Here I highlight three:

1. Method of appointment: Members of the Management Committee,

who are the managers of their respective Areas/Departments, are all selected by those they manage. This helps to establish a degree of trust and common purpose from the outset. It is a principle that also applies, to some degree, to the appointment of Trustees, where nominations are sought from the staff as well as from within the body of Trustees itself.

2. *When I applied for the post of Chair of Management, part of the appointment process involved my being "interviewed" by some 60 staff members, at the end of which people were asked to indicate whether or not they supported my appointment. The fact that they unanimously did so was both extremely gratifying, and very helpful when we faced difficult issues in the months ahead. Whatever else were happening, the legitimacy of, and support for, my appointment was never in question.*

3. Duration of appointment: All appointments are for a fixed period, at the end of which the incumbent may seek to be reappointed. This aims to ensure that staff are not just initially appointed to the right job but that this continues to be the case throughout their period of tenure.

4. Review and feedback: Appointments to key staff are reviewed, on an annual basis, by those they manage. Feedback is sought and the incumbent continues in post aware of how their work is being received. They may choose to adapt or not, but at least they are aware, and the staff have been able to voice directly their personal experience. Where the feedback is particularly negative, it is unlikely that the person will choose to continue in the post, knowing they do not enjoy the confidence of those they seek to lead.

I am aware that, for such principles to be lived, a particular organisational culture needs to be in place. My suggestion is that, for businesses to survive and thrive in tough times, such a culture, and principles similar to this, are almost certainly necessary.

Before leaving the question of structure, I want to pay attention to the role of one particular, work area, the **Spiritual and Personal Development Area**.

While this has much in common with any other HR department, it is worth highlighting the following:

- **TRAININGS**
- **SUPERVISION – individual and group**
- **SELF-EVALUATIONS (focus on relationship between inner reality and outer task**
- **CONFLICT FACILITATION**
- **VALUES AND ETHICS**

• Training: Much of this is "preventative" i.e. designed to equip staff with the skills needed both to do the job effectively and to build the relationships that will support themselves as people and their ability to do the job well. All staff receive, for example, training in supervision skills (whether they are to be supervisors or supervisees) and in conflict facilitation.

- Supervision: This covers both the provision of training (see above)

and the provision of skilled "external" (i.e. outside the line management structure) supervisors who may offer facilitation to a work group during times of difficulty and challenge.

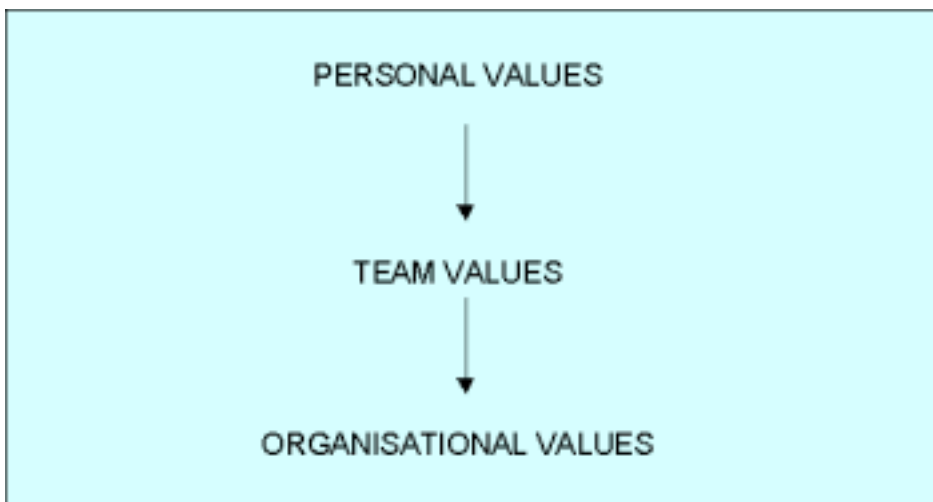
- Self-evaluation: Every staff member is offered an annual (and in the early days of their employment, more frequent) self-evaluation interview. While the work department will conduct more task-focussed appraisals, the Spiritual and Personal Development Area offers the individual the space to reflect on how their inner world (values, motivation, life purpose ...) is or is not being reflected in their outer reality (in this case, their job). The staff member may or may not choose to then discuss this with their line manager but the organisation as a whole is aware of the person's deeper journey, and this aspect of the person is seen and experienced as being of value and importance.

- Conflict facilitation: As with "supervision" this is both provided within the context of staff training, and offered to groups and/or individuals where conflict is being experienced. One of the values that everyone signs up to is a willingness to work on, and hopefully resolve, conflicts as and when they emerge.

- Values and ethics: Beyond elaborating statements of values, the Foundation has evolved both a statement that sets out how we all aspire to live and work together (*Common Ground*) and an understanding that working with values requires more than the creation of lists of nice words.

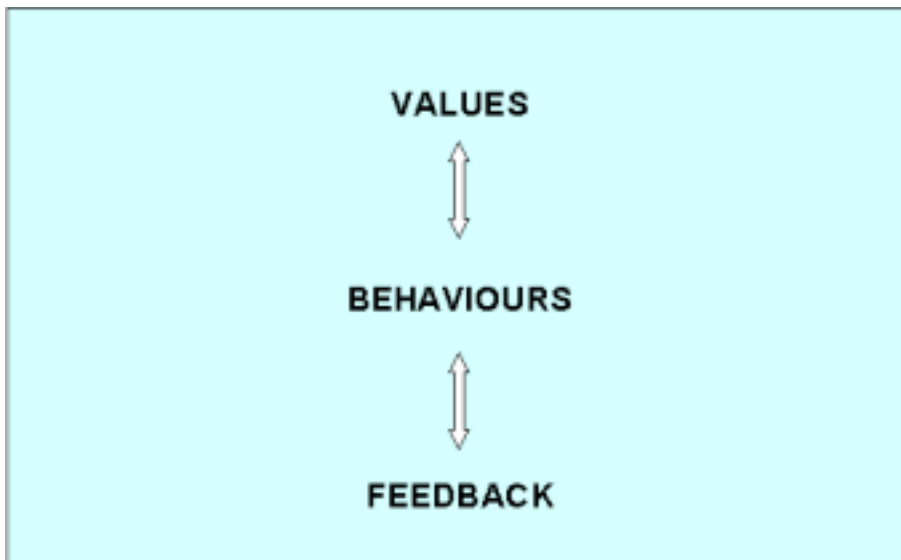
5...Values

So, how to make our values live?



This diagram, or something similar may well be familiar. Many organisations use sophisticated tools to elaborate individual, team and organisational values. These tools may be sufficiently complex to enable both *aspired* and *actualised* values to be made visible, and even for levels of values to be seen (often based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs).

However, for values to be lived there needs to be an awareness of an alternative sequence:



First, we need to translate the words into **behaviours**:

"OK – integrity is a key value in this business. What does that look like here? What are three examples of things we would expect to see in this organisation if the value of "integrity" is being lived out? What are three examples of things we would not expect to see in this organisation if the value of "integrity" is alive here?"

and then we need to ensure that mechanisms, and a culture, exist where effective **feedback** can be given and received on how the organisation's espoused values are actually being experienced.

Such feedback may be sought from within the organisation (either through formal, planned reviews and consultations or through the creation of a climate where it is freely offered and received) and/or from other stakeholders through some form of social auditing and stakeholder review. The creation of a culture where feedback is freely, regularly and openly given and received, will, in turn, require that attention is paid to:

- **Rank**
- **Power**
- **Culture**
- **Communication skills**
- **Feedback skills**

The role of integral leadership in establishing this should, by now, be clear.

6...Conclusion

The practice of integral leadership, that is leadership which pays equal attention to task, processes and relationships; that understands and practices the appropriate use of will, the necessity of inner listening, and has the ability and awareness to harness natural wisdom; gives an organisation

a foundation on which its dreams can be built and manifested. The practice of integral leadership will also, inevitably, promote the questioning of the organisation's purpose, of how it lives and embodies its values, of how much creativity and inspiration people can express in their daily work - in a word it will raise questions of how much soul lives in the workplace.

This is no bad thing – though it may well be uncomfortable for those who seek to lead from a set of preconceived ideas about what is and is not appropriate in their organisation.

As David Whyte, poet and organisational consultant, puts it:
It seems that all the overripe hierarchies of the world, from corporations to nation states, are in trouble and are calling, however reluctantly, on their people for more creativity, commitment and innovation. If these corporate bodies can demand those creative qualities which by long tradition belong so directly to our being, to our soul, they must naturally make room for their disturbing presence within their buildings and their borders.
David Whyte, "The Heart Aroused"

Integral leadership makes space for the soul, both of the organisation and of the individuals within it. Ultimately, this must lead to orienting at least part of the organisation's purpose towards addressing the most pressing needs of humanity – to expanding its bottom line into a genuine triple bottom line where profit and economic sustainability (Task) sit next to social responsibility (Process) and care for the environment (Relationship) and each aspect is seen as equally important, and each is integrated within the other. Such a practice will ensure not only that people are inspired, creative and valued in their work, but that leadership is appropriate to the times we are in, and will help to maximise the chance of survival, and even of flourishing, in tough times.

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