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The Conscious Leader: Elevating Awareness and Intentionality in Organizations

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Abstract

We live in a complex and rapidly changing world, where leaders' role becomes more and more critical for organizational success. Effective leaders are expected not only to manage subordinates and administer tasks, but they should be able to motivate, inspire and drive employees to achieve common goals. To achieve this, leader should have high self-awareness and ability to understand and sense people, situations, environment. This is called "Consciousness", which is built from values, beliefs and behaviors. This article explores the concept of leadership consciousness and its importance in today's uncertain and complex environment. It claims that leadership consciousness plays pivotal role in building organizations core values, beliefs and purpose. Values and beliefs primarily affect leaders' actions and decisions. By studying leader's values, beliefs and behaviors we can have deeper understanding of their leadership style and effectiveness. Every leader operated from the levels of their consciousness. It is interesting to explore how leadership consciousness is built and what it plays in leaders' success. a comprehensive guide how leaders can evaluate their level of consciousness and identify development areas. Traditional leadership frameworks lack emphasis on personal development. Leaders' inner development is the key to cultivating consciousness to become authentic leaders, being able to build trust, respect, common values and purpose. The article analyzes several

theoretical frameworks that are aligned to the leadership consciousness: Richard Barrett's Seven Levels of Leadership Consciousness model, which suggests that leaders develop through seven hierarchical levels. Also, Ken Wilber's Integral Theory, the "Conscious Capitalism" framework, study on mindfulness and leadership, value-based leadership approaches, and the theory of "Quantum Leadership." The article provides the following key findings: importance of aligning personal and organizational values, the correlation between cultural entropy, employee engagement and productivity, and the practical application of Barrett's model for leader development. This article represents valuable insights for leaders, managers, human resources professionals and individuals to gain more insights on the importance and role of leadership consciousness for developing self, building successful teams and lead organizations effectively.

Keywords: Consciousness, Self-awareness, Leadership, organizational success

Introduction

„In the face of turbulence and change, culture and values become the major source of continuity and coherence, of renewal and sustainability. Leaders must find the common purpose and universal values that unite highly diverse people while still permitting individual entities to be expressed and enhanced. Indeed, emphasizing purpose and values helps leaders support and facilitate self-organizing networks that can respond quickly to change because they share an understanding of the right thing to do” (Kanter, 2010).

Concept of leadership consciousness is important for several reasons:

- Leaders should be able to navigate in constantly changing and complex environments. In an increasingly unstable and ambiguous world, leaders should be able to understand of their values and purpose to guide their organizations through change.
- Leaders should be able to build strong cultures. People stay or leave organizations because of the culture. Culture and values have become the major source of continuousness, renewal and sustainability. Leaders must find the common purpose and universal values that guide highly diverse people.
- Nowadays, society awareness has been shifted to a radically new level. Sustainability, ecology and care for the planet have become more and more important. Beyond individual interests, caring for the common good becomes critical. Value based leadership covers the full spectrum of sustainability. Everybody wants to live in a better world, but caring only for personal interest's better world cannot be created.

The objective of this article is to understand implications of values, beliefs and behaviors in creating leadership consciousness. Specifically, the article aims to:

- Identify how culture is cultivated.
- Examine what are the values, beliefs and behaviors that drive conscious leaders.
- Identify how values, beliefs and behaviors relate to leadership success.
- Understand how to cultivate consciousness to become an effective leader.

There is much literature on leadership, where leadership styles, competencies or behaviors of successful leaders are reviewed. Nevertheless, leadership consciousness levels are less explored. It is interesting how leadership consciousness is built and what it plays in leaders' success.

This article explores the concept of leadership consciousness by reviewing and combination of existing literature, mainly focusing on the theoretical frameworks and empirical research of Richard Barrett and other notable authors in the field. Methodology used for the article is qualitative. It aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the concept, its key components, and its implications for leadership effectiveness and organizational culture. The analysis is based on established frameworks, supported with research findings.

The article combines these different viewpoints to provide a general and holistic understanding of leadership consciousness. It explores the relationship between values, beliefs, behaviors, and effectiveness, and identified both theoretical frameworks and empirical research. Though the article does not present new empirical findings, it offers valuable insights by integrating existing knowledge and providing a context for comprehending and developing leadership consciousness.

Conscious leadership in literature

Reviewing literature on leadership consciousness showed that there are limited number of studies exploring correlation of conscious leadership on organizational performance. Below are several theories and frameworks exploring leadership consciousness.

One of them is Ken Wilber's Integral Theory, suggesting that leaders should develop their consciousness covering emotional, moral, spiritual and cognitive perspectives. Based on the mentioned theory Wilber suggests a hierarchical model of consciousness and lines of development (Wilber, 2000). The theory was criticized for the lack of empirical evidence and complexity (Wilber, 2008). Despite criticism, the theory provides a general approach to personal and societal transformation.

Quadrant	Focus
Upper-left	Individual interior (our personal thoughts, feelings and experiences)
Upper-right	Individual exterior (our physical body and behavior)
Lower-left	Collective interior (culture, society, shared values)
Lower-right	Collective exterior (systems, structures, environment)

Source: Wilber, 2008

Leadership consciousness was also explored in John Mackey and Raj Sisodia's book "Conscious Capitalism: Liberating the Heroic Spirit of Business". The framework suggested by John Mackey and Raj Sisodia highlighted the value of purpose, profit, people and planet. It articulates that conscious leaders should incorporate these directions in business practices. The framework prioritizes stakeholders (employees, suppliers, customers and community) and implies that conscious businesses have positive affect on brand reputation, building relationships and company performance (Mackey, Sisodia, 2013). This framework was also criticized for lack of empirical evidence in spite of the fact that the authors had many case studies supporting strong correlation between conscious capitalism practices and improved financial performance, social impact, or employee satisfaction (O'Toole, Vogel, 2011).



Source: <https://fixcapitalism.com/what-is-a-conscious-business-an-interview-with-raj-sisodia/>

Davis and Fletcher explored mindfulness and leadership, which is also close with its meaning to leadership consciousness in their book "Mindfulness-based stress reduction: A systematic review". They suggested

that Mindfulness-based practices improve leadership effectiveness as they enhance attention, emotional regulation and decision-making (Davis, Fletcher, 2008). Mindfulness became very popular for managing stress and improving overall well-being. It enhances emotional well-being by enhancing attention, decision making skills and memory (Tang et al., 2007). But at the same time developing mindfulness requires time and might not be practical for everyone. Practice of mindfulness can bring discomfort or frustration, depending on individual preferences. Thus, it cannot be widely used.

Since consciousness is derived from culture and values it is also interesting to explore value-based leadership. Value-based leadership is about connecting organizational goals with company values, enhancing culture and motivating employees to use their potential fully. Value-based leadership emphasizes several components: 1. Ethical Leadership, which is about holding moral and ethical standards and making ethical decisions Ethical (Brown et al., 2005). 2. Authentic Leadership, referring to leaders who are self-aware, open and honest. They build trust and loyalty by being genuine and trustworthy (George, 2003); 3. Servant Leadership, focusing on prioritizing the needs of their followers and empowering them to perform to their best and Transformational Leadership.

Another piece of research that is interesting to review is the one conducted by Trevino & Brown. They showed that organizations with strong ethical climates and values-based leadership are outperforming their competitors (Trevino, Brown, 2004). But to have value-based leadership in place organizations need to develop strong culture and values.

Frederick Chavalit Tsao and Chris Laszlo introduced concept of “Quantum Leadership” (Tsao, Laszlo, 2020). Key elements of Quantum leadership are non-linear thinking, systems thinking, embracing uncertainty, and a holistic perspective. By integrating these elements leaders will increase their level of consciousness and can guide organizations with greater effectiveness. Based on this theory conscious leaders should be mindful, self-aware, have a sense of empathy and be purpose driven. Such leaders will not only increase organizations profitability, but also operate with high social responsibility and prioritize sustainability practices (Tsao, Laszlo, 2020).

One of the most interesting theories on leadership consciousness is offered by Richard Barrett in his book “The New leadership paradigm” (Barrett, 2011), where Barrett describes relationship between leadership consciousness and their values, beliefs and behaviors. Leader’s consciousness is based on the values, beliefs and behaviors they hold and reflects on the way they lead, act or make decisions.

Richard Barret was the first to map and explore culture, values and consciousness together to create better understanding of leadership. The culture that leaders build reflects their values, beliefs and behaviors. Every

leader lead from the level of their consciousness. More than 40,000 companies use Barrett's framework across the world (www.valuescentre.com). The framework has not been used in Georgia.

This article aims to increase awareness of the importance of leadership consciousness, values and culture. This will help organizations to diagnose their culture, better define values and increase leadership consciousness to become more effective.

We believe that today value-based leadership has critical importance for company success. Compensation, working conditions, people development and care are important, but not enough. The most important question or employees is "why?". This question refers to the values and culture of organizations and leaders.

Richard Barrett was exploring for 10 years leadership consciousness and its development. He created 7 levels of leadership consciousness. His book "The New Leadership Paradigm" is one of the most interesting works created about leadership development for the 21st century (Barrett, 2011). It explains leadership principles and concepts related to the full spectrum of consciousness that help them to shift from self-interest to the common good (Barrett, 2023).

Barrett's research showed that leaders with high levels of consciousness are more effective and have a positive impact on their organizations (Barrett, 2005).

Organizational culture and leadership consciousness

In order to explore more about leadership consciousness, it is important to review culture and cultural changes. How consciousness can be measured in relations to values. Richard Barrett used this method in over 5000 organizations and more than 60 countries, in 38 universities and schools (Barrett, 2018). According to this methodology organizations build an environment where people enjoy working. Culture of an organization is a reflection of values, beliefs and behaviors of the current leaders and the legacy of past leaders. If culture change is necessary, either leaders should be changed or leaders should change themselves and change internal processes and procedures.

What are values? Values are individual or collective motivators and what is important to individual, organization or society. There are positive and potentially limiting values. Positive values are trust, creativity, passion, honesty, integrity, clarity etc.

Potentially limiting values are bureaucracy, power, blame, greed, hierarchy, s-seeking etc. Why are they considered values if they are potentially limiting? Because they satisfy specific needs and most commonly ego, which is based on fear.

Many years ago, Richard Barrett named 4 mantras of cultural changes:

- 1) Cultural capital, which is a new edge of competitive advantage.
- 2) The culture of an organization, reflecting leadership consciousness.
- 3) Cultural transformation begins with personal transformation of the leaders as organizations do not transform, but people do.
- 4) Measurement matters, meaning that whatever is measured tends to improve.

Here the most important thing is the leader's role. Where can we find such value-oriented organizations? These are organizations where people want to work for.

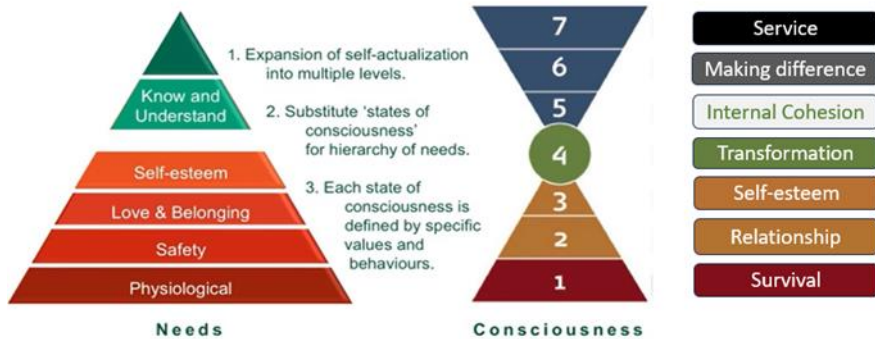
If we look at the best companies in the USA, recognized as best employers, these organizations care about employees. The profit of such organizations is 4 times more than that of those which care less for their employee well-being. This research was conducted not for one limited period, but for 10 years.

Richard Barrett created model of 7 levels of consciousness. He took Maslow's hierarchy of needs and expanded self-actualization part, added elements from Hind philosophy, spiritual consciousness, cosmic consciousness and God consciousness and this way built 7 levels.



Source: Barrett, R. (2018). *Everything I have learned about values*. Lulu. com.

He developed self-actualization, that Maslow talked about. He replaced needs with values and corresponding levels of consciousness. This means that any value that one can think about corresponds to a specific level of consciousness. If organizations knows that their values, then it is possible to plot it on a map and see big picture.



Source: Barrett, R. (2018). *Everything I have learned about values*. Lulu. com.

Richard Barrett's 7 levels of consciousness starts with physiological and safety needs. Then moves to belonging needs. For esteem and respect needs. On this level there are positive values or also potentially limiting values in case one is too concentrated on his/her ego, power or status. If one is too concerned with the need to belong, he/she wants to be liked by everyone, if not blaming others occurs. If one is too concerned with safety needs, he/she lacks trust. These are the first three levels of people's development. After these levels people start thinking about who they are on the level of internal cohesion, where individuals want to contribute to society. Changes come only after realization that one can contribute even more to society. In this case personal transformation begins. This is the sixth level of consciousness. The seventh level is the highest one meaning that one can contribute to the world and development of humanity.

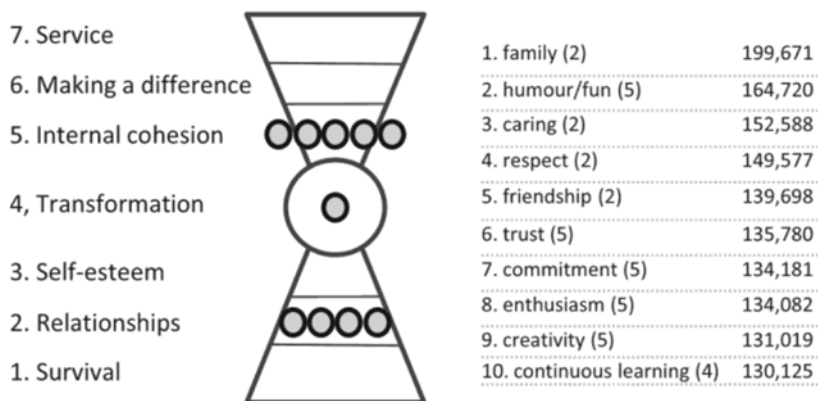
The same happens in the organizations. If we take 7 levels of consciousness:



Source: www.valuescentre.com

1. Safety needs relate to financial stability.
2. Need for belonging relates to loyalty, relationships, systems and processes within the organization.
3. Need for respect and self-esteem corresponds to the respect and appreciation that people want to have.
4. From fourth level continuous transformation comes. When organization starts observing itself, adapting, setting free from bureaucracy, strict hierarchy, corresponding to the third level.
5. From level 5 internal cohesion is built, common vision and values, where sense of trust becomes critical.
6. Next level is strategic one. When organization is focused on common goals, the main idea why organization exists and strategic relationship with partners.
7. The highest level is serving humanity.

Richard Barrett also conducted a personal value assessment survey covering than 500,000 people (Barrett, 2018). The chart below shows the top ten values of these people. As the number of people was so large, Barrett perceived it as values of humanity. The chart represents the seven levels of consciousness model. Shaded dots are the values represented in the chart. Numbers in the brackets represent a level of consciousness. As the chart shows, level 2 relationships (family, caring, respect, friendship) got more votes that the values on levels 4 and 5. The highest score got level 2 family. So, this survey represents top 10 values of 500,000 people.



Source: Barrett, R. (2018). *Everything I have learned about values*. Lulu. com.

These values provide an interesting overview of people's preferences. The top five values represent people's relations: family, respect, care, trust and

friendship. This tells us that safety related to interpersonal relations is critical for people. Personal safety is linked to belonging and identity.

The top five values are about how people relate to themselves, how they define their identity (humor and fun, enthusiasm, creativity, commitment and continuous learning). It encompasses self-actualization and growth needs. It tells us that people need self-expression, and it is also critically important to them. Meaning that they can express their identity when they feel safe.

But people have need of inter-personal safety more than self-expression. Development and growth are important to most people.

Richard Barrett, with his research once again approved Maslow's theory. People cannot develop unless they feel safe. So, safety comes first, after safety self-actualization becomes important.

Before exploring leadership consciousness, it is interesting to review on example how company culture and values are assessed based on Richard Barrett's model.

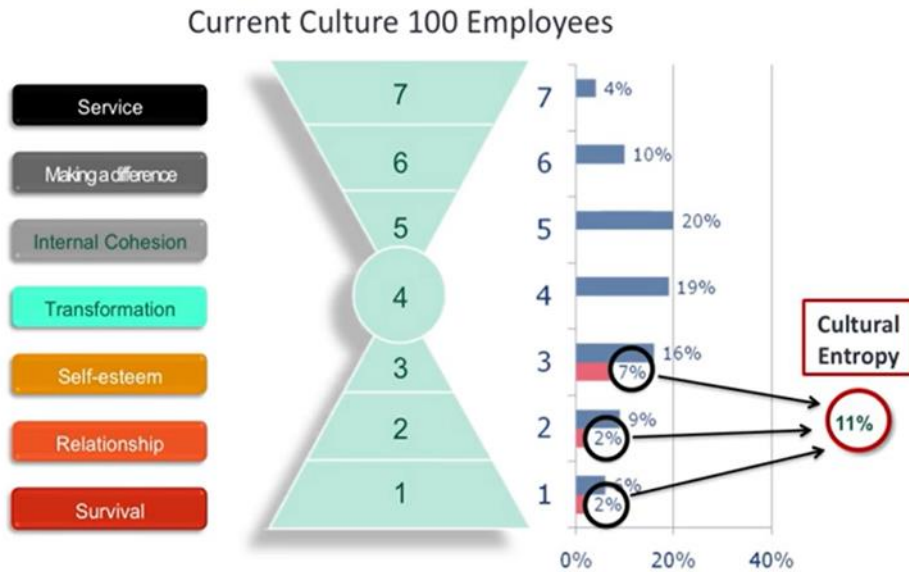
In order to relate level of consciousness, 3 types of values are explored: personal values observed in the organization and values employees want to have within the organization. Employees choose values from lists of 80 or 90 values set specifically for the organization.

In the example below, out of 100 employees who chose 10 values, 59 out of them names tradition. This value might be potentially limiting one. Second value is diversity, which is transformational value. Control is limiting one and so on. The interesting part is that it shows top 10 values by hierarchy.



Source: www.valuescentre.com

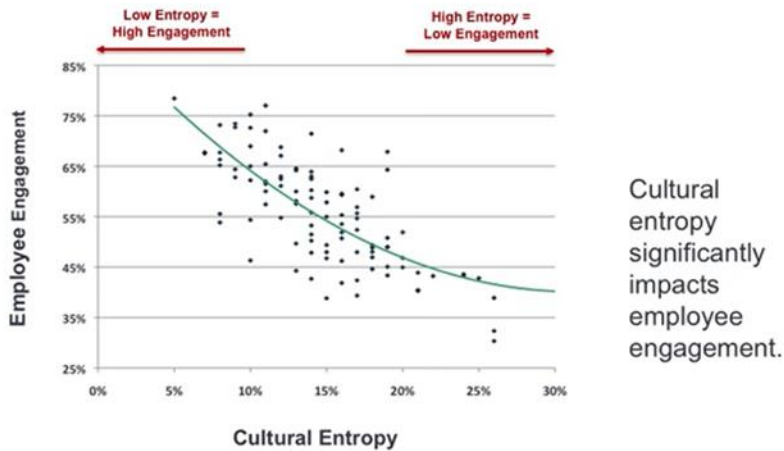
These 100 employees had 10 votes each. The chart below shows 100X10 votes about current culture. If values correspond to level of consciousness, cultural dysfunction will be visible. Cultural dysfunction represents all votes given to potentially limiting values. This number is critically important for the success of the organization.



Source: www.valuescentre.com

Here term of cultural entropy comes in. Cultural entropy is the amount of energy consumed in an organization doing unnecessary or unproductive work that does not add value to. It is a measure of conflicts and frustration that employees encounter in organizations day-to-day life, becoming an obstacle on the way of its success. This is a measurement of threat that people are feeling.

In 163 organizations level of cultural entropy was compared to the employee engagement index. The survey showed that where level of cultural entropy was low employees were more productive and engaged in the proofs. The correlation is very strong between these two parameters. Cultural entropy is also the function of engagement.



Cultural entropy significantly impacts employee engagement.

Research carried out in 163 organisations in Australia by Hewitt Associates and the Barrett Values Centre in 2008.

It is interesting to know where cultural entropy comes from. It comes from the leaders’ personal level of entropy. Also, from the processes and systems left from leaders.

Personal entropy is energy based on fear in day-to-day work environment. It is a measure of a lack of personal mastery skills. Fear driven energy arises from the conscious and subconscious fear-based beliefs of the ego about meeting its deficiency needs. When employees are not appreciated and valued well enough. It shows up in the organization.

If cultural entropy is less than 10% employees are engaged to the maximum and organizations are successful. In case it is 41% employees who are highly disengaged.

Cultural Entropy	Most employees are...
10% or less	Highly Engaged
11% to 20%	Engaged
21% to 30%	Becoming Disengaged
41% and more	Highly Disengaged

Source: www.valuescentre.com

The chart below shows correlation of level of entropy to the productivity of the company.

Level of Entropy	3 years profit %
<10%	32.87%
10%-19%	24.90%
20%-29%	11.39%
>29%	11.07%

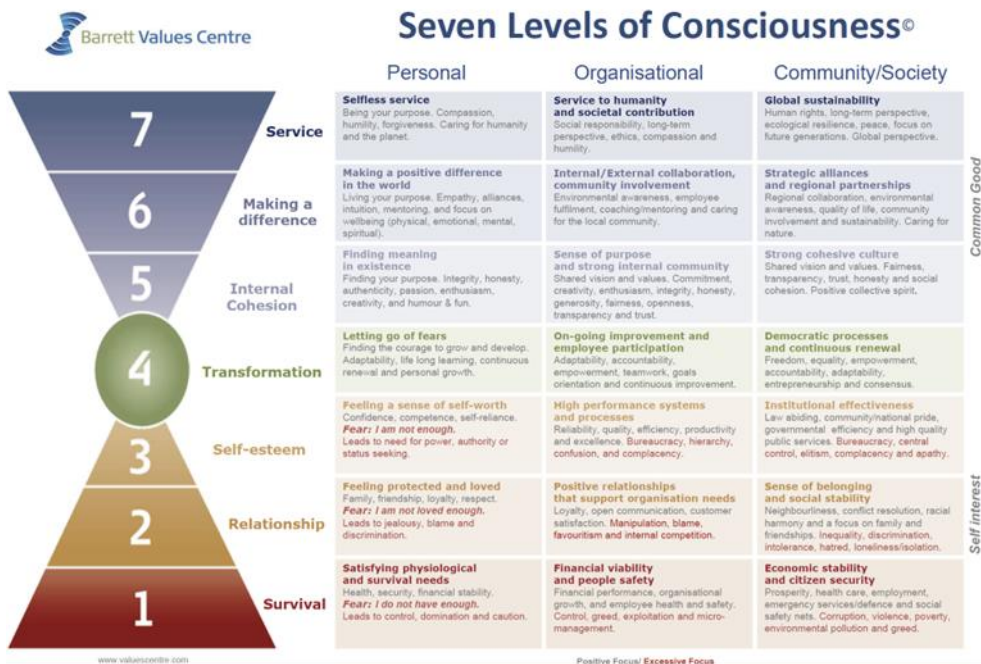
Source: www.valuescentre.com

So, it is important for organisations to decrease employee entrophy level. As soon as personal entropy level decreases it affects the same way cultural entropy.

7 Levels of Leadership Consciousness

It is interesting how do we develop leaders. This has been a challenging question over the years. Richard Barrett’s model provides a comprehensive guide to respond to this question. This model is based on Abraham Maslow’s theory of needs. Richard Barrett decided to stimulate consciousness by making interesting changes. The model can be used starting from an individual level ending up with teams, organizations, societies and nations. The model has been used as a culture transformation instrument, giving possibility to draw values of the organizations and leaders’ values.

The model consists of 7 levels of consciousness and 7 levels of psychological development. Each individual is on a certain level of consciousness and passes 7 steps of psychological development. The extent to which individuals grow and develop depends on his/her ability to satisfy certain needs.



Source: www.valuescentre.com

The first three levels are focused on self-interest, love and belonging. These needs were called physiological or basic needs by Maslow. From level 4 transformation begins and then comes development needs.

Level 1 – Survival

The first level is survival, encompassing physical survival needs such as health, food, security, safety and financial stability on individual level. On an organizational level it represents financial viability and people safety such as: financial performance, organizational growth, and employee health and safety. If we look at society level it refers to economic stability and citizen security. Factors that prevent leaders from developing are fear of not having enough. On an individual level it leads to control, domination and caution; on an organizational level it leads to control, greed, exploitation and micromanagement and on society level it is about the corruption, violence, poverty, environmental pollution and greed.

Level 2 – Relationship

The second level refers to social needs and is about friendship, loyalty, family and respect on a personal level. On the organizational level it is about positive relationships that support organization needs and on the social level it refers to a sense of belonging and social stability. Fears on an individual level led to jealousy, blame and discrimination. On an organizational level it leads to manipulation, blame, favoritism and internal competition. In the case of society, it causes inequality, discrimination, intolerance and isolation.

Level 3 – Self-Esteem

Level three represents the last level before transformation. Self-confidence is also on this level. If leader is not confident the general interest of development cannot be transferred to the upper 3 levels. The third level refers to confidence, competence and self-reliance on individual level. It is about high-performance systems and processes on organizational level and institutional effectiveness on society level. Fears on this level lead to the need for power, authority or status seeking. On an organizational level it leads to bureaucracy, hierarchy, confusion and complacency. In case of society it causes bureaucracy, central control, elitism etc.

Level 4 - Transformation

On level for either leader or organization changes. From self-interest they shift to the common good. On this phase leaders start to let fears go, find purpose, courage to grow and develop. Enhance adaptability continuous learning and personal growth. Organizations on this phase shift to ongoing improvements, encourage employee participation, develop adaptability, accountability and teamwork. Society develops democratic processes and is oriented on continuous renewal. Freedom, equity, empowerment, consensus and adaptability becomes important.

Level 5 – Internal Cohesion

On this level of consciousness leaders find their purpose. Integrity, honesty, authenticity, passion, enthusiasm and creativity become crucial. Organizations on this level identify sense of purpose, shared vision and values, enhance commitment, fairness, openness and transparency. They build strong internal community. Society builds a strong cohesive culture with positive collective spirit, trust, honesty and social cohesion.

Level 6 – Making a difference

Leaders on this level make positive difference in the world, show empathy, build alliances, mentor people and focus on physical, emotional, mental and spiritual wellbeing. Organizations by collaborating internally and externally involve community, increase environmental awareness, focus on coaching and mentoring. Society builds strategic alliances and regional partnerships, care about quality of life, sustainability and nature.

Level 7 – Service

On the highest-level leaders have compassion, humility and forgiveness. They care for humanity and the planet. Organizations serve humanity and societal contribution and societies care for global sustainability.

Practical Application of Richard Barrett's Model

How can this model be used in real life? Leaders can use this system to identify what their strong competencies are and where they need to develop. If we look at the model from leaders' perspective leaders, the first three levels demonstrate positive and potentially limiting behaviors. They can usually build relationships, use specific knowledge and achieve operational targets. But they are motivated by avoiding failure, conflict or avoiding losing control over team. These leaders are less oriented on company vision.

The central, 4th level represents a transformation phase in the hierarchy, where leaders have overcome internal conflicts and are focused on changing their image and building an organization's vision. They still have competencies of lower levels, but they have confidence in their abilities and are still oriented on higher levels.

Below is the overview of types of leaders on different levels of consciousness:

Seven Levels of Leadership



Source: www.valuescentre.com

First Level – Crisis Manager

This level is called finance or functional managers. These are very pragmatic individuals, oriented on achieving budget, employee health and safety and solving short term issues and successful short-term projects. For these characteristics they are perceived as best managers for managing unpredictable crisis situations and returning processes to usual rhythm. They are calm, able to make decisions, characterized by an autoreactive management style.

Managers with autoreactive style usually lose trust over time. Employees become demotivated and it is reflected in results. This means that managers cannot achieve results with openness. They usually have less empathy towards subordinates. Also, they face difficulties in delegating responsibility for important tasks due to the lack of trust they show towards subordinates. Their level of emotional intelligence is low. Too much responsibility that they usually take on themselves is also damaging such leaders.

Second Level – Communications Manager

Second level leaders are communication managers. This is how Barret calls them. They have emotional intelligence, communication, interpersonal skills much more than those on level one. They have the ability to build relationships with team members, can deal with conflict resolutions and

problems coming from emotional backgrounds. They deliver information to subordinates in a comprehensive manner about their roles and responsibilities. They praise subordinates for good performance and communicate about development areas. This ability is very useful in relation to customers, high level managers and external suppliers.

They sometimes are afraid of not being accepted, which mostly comes from the lack of technical or other competencies for achieving short term goals. This fear might show up when such a leader tries to avoid some situations, like conflict, emotional problems or delivering complex information. Instead, they might start manipulating to achieve desired goals. Instead of taking responsibility for failure, they often blame others. They perceive themselves as team leaders requesting obedience and loyalty from subordinates. They are afraid of those outside their team. Sometimes the integration of new team members becomes difficult. This family environment is based on traditional ideas, old and tested methods and diminishes team members' aspiration towards creativity.

Third Level - Organizer

The organizer leader is extremely logic oriented and consistent. They have all activities well planned and scheduled, which increases the effectiveness. They use different measurement tools to evaluate individual and teams' performance. Facing challenges, they think strategically to achieve long term goals. Inwardly focused managers can structure information and monitor results, while outwardly focused managers are confident in forecasting potential problems and getting work done.

They are very organized individuals. Can plan and identify priorities well, schedule the day and work on personal development for future career success. They constantly search for new ways to increase productivity and work quality.

These leaders' self-esteem is usually based on the fear of failure and there is a high probability of developing a need for power and respect. They might want to create small empires inside the organization to demonstrate power to team members. Their passion for success often turns them against others and this might lead to political games and results that once more demonstrate their abilities. Their need for respect might be seen from the clothes they wear or vehicles they drive. They put high importance on external appearance instead of presenting reality. Their aspiration for success might be reflected in long working hours, where they are not able to maintain a work life balance. They spend more time at work than in the family.

Fourth Level - Facilitator Leader

This role is a transformational phase in the middle of hierarchy, where leaders are less oriented on self and want to develop for the future of organization. They are oriented to develop healthy parts of themselves, learn how to lead, master and set themselves free from fears that are on low levels of consciousness. They are interested in other opinions, want consensus while making decisions and empower employees to take more responsibility.

They understand well the risks of making any decisions. Instead of micromanagement or hierarchy they are flexible and observe teamwork. They try to develop themselves and team members using different learning channels. Facilitators try to balance work and personal life, responsibility and freedom. This balance enables them to objectively evaluate their strong sides and development areas and act accordingly. They are not oriented to the fear of failure or expectation of appreciation or criticism. They are open to innovations, new ideas, create a good working environment, decreasing fear for any kind of challenge.

Fifth Level - Integrator/Inspirer

This is the first level of the consciousness upper triangle. Integrators are realized leaders, who can define organization values. They can inspire team members, customers and society. They demonstrate values that are in line with organization and represent the basis of decision making. This creates integrity and links team and individual objectives to organizations. They prioritize individual team members' interests over themselves and even self-development.

Integrators create an open and fair environment and gain trust from team members. Such environment supports creativity and innovation, increasing passion inside their teams. They are confident and transform difficulties into challenges.

Sixth Level – Mentor/Partner

The leader who is mentor or partner has genuine intention to change the world. They are associated with servant leadership. They understand what kind of environment should be created in order to find their meaning and realize their potential. They have strong emotional and social IQ skills. They understand what subordinates really need to make them feel confident and motivated with their role. They feel comfortable in the role of coach, mentor or partner in their role to support individual development of team members.

Leaders on this level of consciousness can build strategical alliances with individuals and teams with common values and vision. They relate and coordinate with customers and suppliers successfully to gain mutual benefits. They also respect sustainability practices and integrate them into

organizations. They are actively involved in the lives of society and work on projects benefiting both business and society. Decision making is another strength of Mentor/Partner leaders.

Seventh Level – Wisdom/Visionary

Leaders on the 7th level of consciousness serve the world. Their vision is global. They can see the full spectrum of life. They serve team members, are genuinely concerned with their problems. Besides working on team members objectives, their main concern is much more global, related to the world and planet. They are oriented towards long term goals and want to impact the life of future generations. They do not compromise long term objectives over short term ones.

These leaders treat subordinates, customers and other stakeholders with humility and passion. They are confident in unpredictable situations, oriented on vision and respected for their wisdom and visionary approach.

Overviewing leadership levels of consciousness what leaders can practice is to learn how to assess which level they are at and identify development areas, focus on continuous learning, align their action with values, define compelling purpose for organizations, understand and act on social responsibility issues and engage in environmental initiatives.

By understanding and applying the Seven Levels of Leadership Consciousness, leaders can develop the skills and mindset needed to create positive change in themselves, their teams, and their organizations.

It is very interesting to review an example of Southwest Airlines, representing the leading example of a company having a strong, positive organizational culture. The company puts high on well-being, fun, friendship and solidarity (reflecting Level 2 and 3 in Barrett's model), and dedication to customer service (reflecting Level 6 in Barrett's model), resulting in high employee morale, customer loyalty, and productivity (<https://www.southwest.com>). While Southwest's culture aligns with higher levels of Barrett's consciousness model, maintaining and nurturing positive culture requires continuous efforts. Southwest's success demonstrated the strong link between a values-driven culture and organizational effectiveness, which is supported by several studies (Miles, Verhoeven, 2014), (Jordan, Troth, 2011).

Recent studies also reveal a strong link between strong organizational culture and its outcomes. For example, study by Shim, Lee, showed that “organizational justice positively correlates with belonging, and commitment and satisfaction significantly influence the sense of belonging” (Shim, Lee, 2024).

Strong cultures affect organizational performance, thus organizational culture can be considered as competitive advantage for companies to succeed.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the article provides interesting cases on importance of leadership consciousness for their success. It depends on the level of consciousness they operate from. By embracing conscious leadership practices, leaders can foster positive organizational cultures, inspire teams, and drive sustainable growth. Cultivating organizational culture is critical for organizations' success. Values, beliefs and behaviors primarily relate to leadership success. Conscious leadership practices can develop leaders' skills and mindset to create positive change in themselves, their teams and their organizations.

The article provides practical steps on how leaders can access their level of consciousness, grow and develop as leaders. As leaders' consciousness primarily affects their leadership style, values, and decisions they make and guide organizations to success.

This means that organizations should put high priority on leadership development to build strong organizational cultures and achieve sustainable success.

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