

POLARITY MANAGEMENT

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Extraordinary leadership and teamwork can change the world.

Polarity Management

Mastering unsolvable problems by achieving healthy tension between *conflicting* values.

Some Classic Organizational Polarities

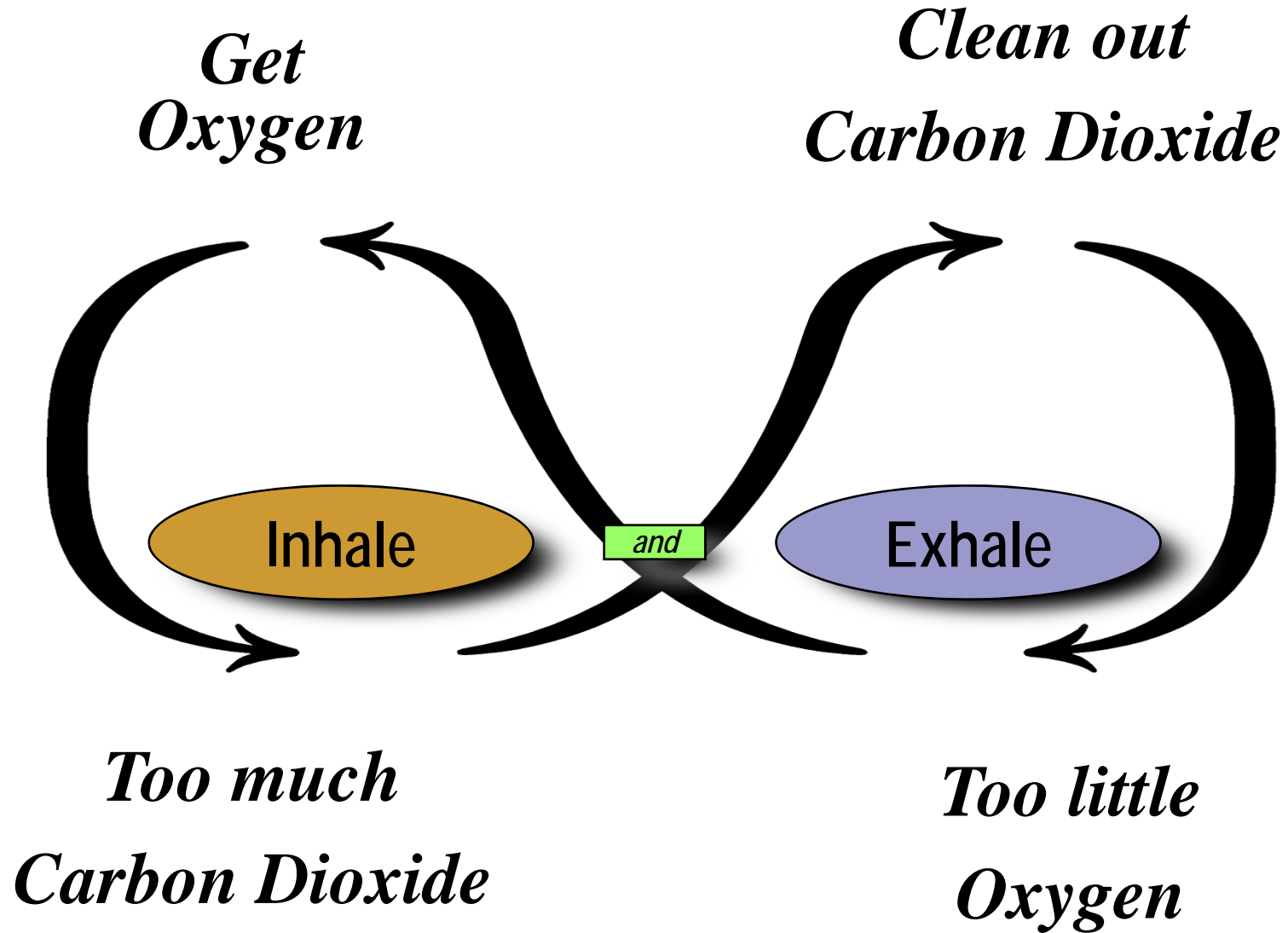
Individual	vs.	Team
Control	vs.	Empowerment
Planning	vs.	Action
Reduce Cost	vs.	Improving Quality
Candor (Truth)	vs.	Diplomacy (Tact)
Stability	vs.	Change

"I believe that the central leadership attribute is the ability to manage polarity. Polarities are in the nature of things. How we act, how we respond to those polarities – that is where we separate greatness from mediocrity."

Peter Koestenbaum – Ph. D, Leadership Philosopher

Guarantees of a Polarity

- **Unsolvable**
- **Unavoidable**
- **Indestructible**
- **Unstoppable**



“The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function.”

F. Scott Fitzgerald

“Companies which are built to last do not accept the The Tyranny of the OR but instead embrace The Genius of the AND.”

Collins & Porras– Good to Great

HOW TO MANAGE POLARITIES WELL OVER TIME

1. Identify your “CRUX” polarities

- Seeing is relieving!
- Focus on “healthy breathing”

2. *Break your bias*

- Find your opposite
- Move from TOLERATING to EMBRACING

3. Learn the language of Polarity Management

- There is wisdom in resistance
- Ground the conversation in the Higher Purpose
- The Golden Rule - No BUTS, only ANDS

4. Make “polarity informed” decisions

- Move from PART-TRUTH to the WHOLE-TRUTH

POLARITIES – PARADOX – DILEMMA

13 Leadership Polarities

Polarity Management Associates

- Task **AND** Relationship
- Candor **AND** Diplomacy
- Responsibility **AND** Freedom
- Guidance **AND** Tolerance
- Confidence **AND** Humility
- Critical Analysis **AND** Encouragement
- Control **AND** Empowerment
- Grounded **AND** Visionary
- Structure **AND** Flexibility
- Logic **AND** Creativity
- Individual **AND** Work Group
- Planning **AND** Implementation
- Decisiveness **AND** Mindfulness

11 Organizational Polarities

Polarity Management Associates

- Centralized Coordination **AND** Decentralized Initiatives
- Recognize the Individual **AND** Recognize the Team
- Reduce Cost **AND** Improve Quality
- Competing with Others **AND** Collaborating with Others
- Stability **AND** Change
- Celebrating Our Differences **AND** Celebrating Our Commonalities
- Care for My Part of the Organization **AND** Care for the Whole Organization
- Showing Respect for Every Person **AND** Showing Respect Based on Performance
- Getting the Job Done (task) **AND** Building Relationships
- Taking Care of the Organization **AND** Taking Care of the Customer
- Work **AND** Home

Level 5 Leadership Polarities

From Good to Great by Jim Collins

- Self **AND** Organization
- Willfulness **AND** Humility
- Right People on Bus **AND** Wrong People off Bus
- Debate **AND** Unity
- Candor **AND** Diplomacy
- Reality **AND** Faith
- Deep Understanding **AND** Simplicity
- Discipline **AND** Entrepreneurship
- Technology Fads **AND** Pioneering
- Evolutionary **AND** Revolutionary
- Preserve Core **AND** Stimulate Change

COMMUNICATING POLARITIES

1. Hold on to your point of view
2. Try to understand the opposite point of view
(EMBRACE)
3. Discuss how both perspectives **NEED** to work together towards the “higher purpose” of an effective organization
4. The Golden Rule - No BUTS, only ANDS

Make “Polarity Informed” Decisions

“The issues that cross my desk are hard and complicated, and oftentimes involve the clash not of right and wrong, but of two rights. And you’re having to balance and reconcile against competing values that are equally legitimate.”

President Barack Obama – Rolling Stone, October 14, 2010

NOW WHAT?

Key Insight?	
Based on this key insight I will now:	
Start:	
Stop:	
Sustain:	

Polarity Management™ Bibliography

Collins, James C. and Jerry I. Porras. Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies. New York: HarperCollins, 1994.

Authors identify the "Genius of the 'AND'" as a central variable that distinguished the "Gold" companies from the "Silver" companies. The whole book is based on managing the polarity of "Preserve the Core & Stimulate Progress." This could also be seen as the generic Stability & Change polarity.

Collins, Jim. Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap...and Others Don't. New York: HarperCollins, 2001.

The "Genius of the 'And'" continues as an important variable in this book and is identified as a key characteristic of leaders moving companies from Good to Great. There are 10 identifiable polarities seen as central to becoming a level 5 leader.

Dodd, Dominic and Ken Favaro. The Three Tensions: Winning the Struggle to Perform Without Compromise. John Wiley and Sons, 2007.

Authors interview executives from 200 companies and identify 3 important tensions (polarities) central to their organization's effectiveness: Profitability & Growth; Today & Tomorrow; and, The Whole & Its Parts.

de Wit, Bob and Ron Meyer. Strategy Synthesis: Resolving Strategy Paradoxes to Create Competitive Advantage. London: Thomson, 1999.

de Wit and Meyer identify 10 paradoxes (polarities) which are at the heart of strategic management.

Elsner, Richard and Bridget Farrands. Lost in Transition: How Business Leaders Can Successfully Take Charge In New Roles, London: Marshall Cavendish Limited, 2006.

Authors identify 8 tensions (polarities) which, when managed well, contribute significantly to being successful in new jobs.

Fletcher, Jerry and Kelle Olwyler. Paradoxical Thinking: How to Profit From Your Contradictions. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 1997.

"After more than fifteen years of studying thousands of detailed examples of people performing at their best, Fletcher and Olwyler have found that individuals are always paradoxical when performing optimally and that each person has a particular combination of contradictory and paradoxical (polarity) qualities that work together to produce that person's best work."

Hammett, Peter, Unbalanced Influence: Recognizing and Resolving the Impact of Myth and Paradox in Executive Performance. Davies-Black Publishing, 2007.

Ten year of executive research indicates the importance of paradox in executive performance.

Hampden-Turner, Charles. Charting the Corporate Mind: Graphic Solutions to Business Conflicts. New York: The Free Press, 1990.

Charles Hampden-Turner has written several books on the advantage of managing dilemmas in which his research shows that those companies that manage key dilemmas well outperform those that don't.

Hampden-Turner, Charles and Alfons Trompenaars. The Seven Cultures of Capitalism: Value Systems for Creating Wealth in the United States, Japan, Germany, France, Britain, Sweden, and The Netherlands. New York: Doubleday, 1993.

Building Cross-Cultural Competence: How to Create Wealth from Conflicting Values. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2000.

Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars identify 6 dilemmas (polarities) which must be managed to support cross-cultural competence.

Polarity Management™ Bibliography

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Handy, Charles. The Age of Paradox. Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1994.

Handy builds on his earlier work, The Age of Unreason, to assert the balancing of paradoxes (polarities) at the heart not just of effective personal and organizational life, but of our survival as a world community.

Hickman, Craig R. Mind of a Manager Soul of a Leader. New York: John Wylie & Sons, 1990.

Support for the benefits of paradoxical thinking also show up in Hickman's book the title of which is a fundamental polarity in leadership.

Hofstede, Geert. Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions, and Organizations Across Nations. London: Sage Publications, Ltd., 2001.

Hofstede identifies 5 dimensions (polarities) of national culture to help us tap national differences as a resource.

Johnson, Barry. Polarity Management: Identifying and Managing Unsolvable Problems. Amherst: HRD Press, 1992, 1994.

Johnson shares a number of case examples in which the shift from seeing an issue as a problem to solve to managing it as a polarity added real value for individual leaders and for organizations.

Johnston, Charles M. Necessary Wisdom: Meeting the Challenge of a New Cultural Maturity. Seattle: ICD Press, 1991.

Johnston identifies 5 key polarity domains within culture and asserts the importance of understanding and bridging polarities. Managing polarities are at the heart of wisdom and cultural maturity and how we "must learn to think and act if our future is to be a healthy one."

Pascale, Richard Tanner. Managing on the Edge: How the Smartest Companies Use Conflict to Stay Ahead. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991.

Pascale identifies "managing contention better" as the key variable that separated the 14 companies that kept their "excellent" rating from the 29 that did not when looking at the 43 companies identified in the book In Search of Excellence. What he means by "managing contention" is managing polarities/dilemmas/paradoxes and he identifies 7 giving examples of each.

Quinn, Robert E. Beyond Rational Management: Mastering the Paradoxes and Competing Demands of High Performance. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1988.

Quinn asserts that mastering paradox (polarity) is the central to high performance.

Quinn, Robert E. Building The Bridge As You Walk On It: A Guide for Leading Change. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004.

Quinn identifies 8 polarities as "The fundamental state of leadership."

Sisodia, Raj, Jag Sheth, and David B. Wolfe. Firms of Endearment: How World Class Companies Profit from Passion And Purpose. Wharton School Publishing, 2007.

The authors discovered that the key indicator for whether a company is a great investment is the degree to which it manages the polarity of taking care of the stockholders & the stakeholders. In other words attending to company interests & the interests of the larger community in which the company exists.

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