

Exploring the Triple Impact of Evolutionary Co-leadership

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to explore – from an integral perspective – what it means and what it takes to transcend and include individual leadership in moving toward evolutionary co-leadership, as well as the triple impact it can have – at the individual, group, and societal levels. There are profound shifts occurring across all sectors of society that have many leadership implications about what can be learned from the evolutionary perspective. These considerations lead to reflect upon on how evolutionary co-leadership will best meet the need to develop large numbers of integral leaders in all sectors of society – and to examine what subjective, inter-subjective, and objective shifts are needed in making such a move. In conclusion, several initiatives are explored that could contribute to deepening, nurturing, and expanding this evolving concept and practice of leadership – in order to deal with what Barbara Marx Hubbard[1] calls the current “birthing pains” of an emerging civilization.

This article is intended for agents of transformation in organizations from all sectors, as well as researchers and educators – particularly those who want to deepen their understanding of the “evolutionary call” and are experiencing the limits of focusing mainly on individual leadership development.

Introduction

We are at the beginning of a new cycle, one which challenges several interdependent elements that have dominated our history: 1) Thirty years of ultra-capitalism and hyper-consumption by the haves – characterized by economic and financial excesses at the expense of individual well-being, social justice, and the natural environment. 2) Western modernity and “salvation by the economy”[2] – which brought multiple freedoms and human/social rights for many over the last 250 years. Yet it has also caused an objectification of nature and human beings, including new forms of inhumanity. 3) A 3000-year “mental age” – that has resulted in an imbalance between mental intelligence and body/heart intelligence. 4) 6000 years of Patriarchy, which led to men dominating women and nature, as well as to the exclusive hierarchies of the elites concentrating power and money in their hands – thus exacerbating feelings of scarcity and fear among the many. 5) A period of humanity’s adolescence, which may have been concluded with the end of a long solar cycle in December 2012.

The conjunction of these factors in the last three decades has produced management forms and leadership styles that have severely inhibited the development and creativity of individuals – deteriorating their relationship with their communities and with nature, as well as the meaning of their life. In particular, the dominating management mode – which uses coercion and control through more complex, constraining management tools, including the pressure of systematic productivity – has led to low levels of trust, commitment, and creativity of the workforce. Compromised human relationships have occurred – both inside and outside most large organizations. Socially and politically, this recent evolution has led among citizens to an erosion of trust in leaders, with very few exceptions.

There are many signs that make the beginning of a new cycle visible – although not yet acknowledged by the mainstream media. Specifically, new forms of collective leadership – called here co-leadership – exemplify anticipatory experimentation, as well as the interdependence between personal and societal transformation. Co-evolutionary leadership creates conditions that allow individuals to “grow in humanity” – liberating their creative potential and enabling them to contribute, if they wish, to this key emerging evolutionary stage. This qualitative growth will continue to occur through the wider adoption of appropriate

individual and collective developmental practices that are an essential component of transforming education. Current developments combine the best of traditional societies, modernity, and post-modernity – while also transcending them to manifest a new wisdom for a balanced relationship with nature, the human community, and spirit.

In the following pages, I offer a first definition of two of the terms I use in the title of the paper, starting with *evolutionary* – a word that is rather recent in the leadership field.

Why Evolutionary?

The word *evolutionary* is used here to characterize the person who facilitates, catalyzes, and feels responsible for – at his/her level – the evolution of humanity and the conditions of life on the planet, and connects their actions to the context of the “Great Story” of the evolution of the universe. This person realizes that we are entering an era of conscious evolution.

This story of 13.7 billion years has been punctuated by three “Big Bangs” or qualitative jumps – that are acknowledged, but largely unexplained, by Science. The first Big Bang gave birth to the visible universe, to our solar system, and to the mineral and chemical elements of which we are made. The second Big Bang corresponds to the appearance of life on the planet, ranging from mono-cellular organisms to plants and animals – life evolution is inscribed in us, particularly in the evolution of the fetus and of our vital systems. The third Big Bang marks the emergence of human consciousness and the capacity to reflect, which evolved through successive cultural and structural stages – each one representing a different perspective or worldview on human nature and society.

These various perspectives – egocentric, ethnocentric, geocentric, cosmocentric – are present or potential in each one of us, although one of them tends to dominate, depending on our level of maturity. They correspond to what Albert Einstein called “increasing circles of compassion”: me, my familiar group, the human species, the other life forms on the planet and the entire universe – visible and invisible.

The third evolutionary Big Bang has enabled us gradually to have a decisive influence on the collective future of humanity and other sentient species on the planet. By being freed from focusing only on physical survival, a growing number of people have acquired the freedom to contribute to the evolution of humanity as a whole. However, through their behavior as consumers of non-renewable resources, they have created new threats for the planet's survival – as well as its integrity.

The quest for individual happiness or accomplishment is now experienced as too limiting by an increasing number of those who are searching for a deeper life meaning. To find it, they need to recognize and transcend the limitations of their ego, thus making room for the evolutionary impulse they are beginning to sense deep within themselves. By connecting to their own sacred sense of humanness, and by awakening to an emerging planetary consciousness, it is possible for them to become conscious agents of evolution.

Why focus on leadership and, in particular, co-leadership?

Why focus specifically on leadership in this paper – and not on individuals in general – as potential agents of conscious evolution? I am using the word *leadership* in its broader sense of innovator and “influencer” in the socio-cultural field, without limiting it to a formal authority position. In that sense, leadership can be applied to any person who does not accept the status quo and commits – alone or with others – to a process of substantial change. As Peter Senge[3] says, to exercise leadership is to speak, listen, and act in a way that enables a team, an organization, or a community to deal with its key challenges in a creative, innovative, and effective way.

My theory of change is that innovation – in ways of being, thinking, or behaving – propagates itself like a wave: going from “innovators” to “early adopters” or “supporters”, then to “late adopters”, and ending with “resisters”. It is an organic model[4] that invites leaders to work with the forces and not against them, as suggested in the book, *The Tao Te King*[5].

It is first necessary to redefine the meaning of the word “leadership” that other languages also use – like French, Spanish, and German – because they don’t have a truly equivalent term. The verb “lead” comes from the Indo-European root “leith”, which means “to go forth”, “to cross a threshold”, or even “to die”. Embracing leadership includes acknowledging a threshold that needs to be crossed – and that something must be left behind for something new to emerge. It also means that letting go of what we think we know or what we imagine we control – may be experienced as a form of death to what has been familiar to us.

What if exercising leadership meant: venturing into the unknown, into the void, with openness and trust; sensing what is about to emerge by being present to what is; participating creatively in a wider field of knowing and doing; giving voice and energy to an evolutionary impulse; inviting self and others to cross a threshold and discover new spaces where collective creativity, intelligence, and wisdom can be expressed; and thus enabling access to the leadership potential which exists in each individual? The poet looking at his blank page, the painter facing his empty canvass, the sculptor in front of a marble block, the director contemplating the empty stage – don’t they experience that “letting go” – so they can truly create without repeating themselves?

According to Joseph Campbell[6], crossing a threshold is a key step in the hero’s initiatory journey, when he leaves a familiar environment. After having heard the call and overcome his refusal to respond, the hero steps into the unknown or the uncertain, leaving behind him a comfort zone where it is not possible to return. In the next steps, he/she finds guides or helpers, particularly to confront internal and external shadows, and develops a Self by calling on all forms of intelligence, and returns to his/her community with this unique gift.

As Stephen Gilligan and Robert Dilts[7] underscore, there is an essential difference between a hero and “champion”: “The former is generally an ordinary human being who is called by life to face extraordinary circumstances. A champion, by contrast, is somebody who fights for an ideal that he believes is the only right vision for the world. He tends to dominate and/or destroy what is different from this egotist ideal”. The hero seeks to transform personally and to transform the relational sphere of which she is a part.

Individual heroes may still be needed today – particularly in the middle of a crisis – but, in the best case, one of their responsibilities is to invite others in the community to become “heroes” as well, on the path to exercising shared or collective leadership. By *crossing a threshold* together, these heroes can also become guides or supporters for each other. Dying to one’s sense of “separateness” – from the Source, from Self, or from other human being – is to allow compassionate expansion in the heart to everything that connects us. This is the meaning of the *Declaration of Oneness* that Ervin Laszlo and Gyorgyi Szabo[8] published a few years ago.

It also means perceiving oneself as a singular instrument of evolution – capable of playing in harmony with others – in service of evolution and the greater collective good. To connect with and give energy to the Essential Self of another is to enact the true spirit of partnership or co-leadership, as musicians do in a jazz band or in a chamber orchestra that plays without a conductor. To consider leadership as both an individual and collective art opens a much wider range of possibilities in oneself and in one’s community.

In summary, authentic leadership means to cross a threshold that opens to the unknown, and become an example for others in discovering or inventing new possibilities to explore and realize. Practicing co-leadership opens a new relational space where an ensemble of people can jointly act as leaders. To enter the dance of partnering with others – and with life itself – requires the embodiment of an evolutionary perspective. It involves awakening to both one’s uniqueness and deep connection to the whole, as well as demonstrating innocence (in the sense of not knowing), humility, presence, empathy, and courage – in the service of evolution. Co-leadership both requires and develops these qualities. An “inner dance” with various aspects of one’s identity builds the foundation on which the “external dance” with others and a larger “evolutionary dance” become possible in service of the whole, as illustrated later in the paper.

A way to practice co-leadership is simply to behave as mutually responsible partners. Petra Künkel[9] defines collective leadership as the capacity of a group of leaders to deliver a contribution for the common good through assuming joint and flexible leadership, according to what is perceived and required. Each co-leader feels no need to personally stand out or impose their views, but cultivates the ability to know or sense what needs to be said and done now or to be prepared for the future, by making use of one’s singular gifts.

Co-leadership challenges the traditional distinction between leaders and followers who agree on one or two objectives to achieve – each one staying within his/her role of decider or implementer. In its emerging forms, co-leadership produces direction, alignment, and mutual commitment as means to attain longer-term goals. It requires that each co-leader examine their beliefs about both individual and collective leadership and engages in practices – such as mutual awakening, shared sense-making, reciprocal adjustment, collective learning, and collective intelligence – that will generate a new leadership culture.

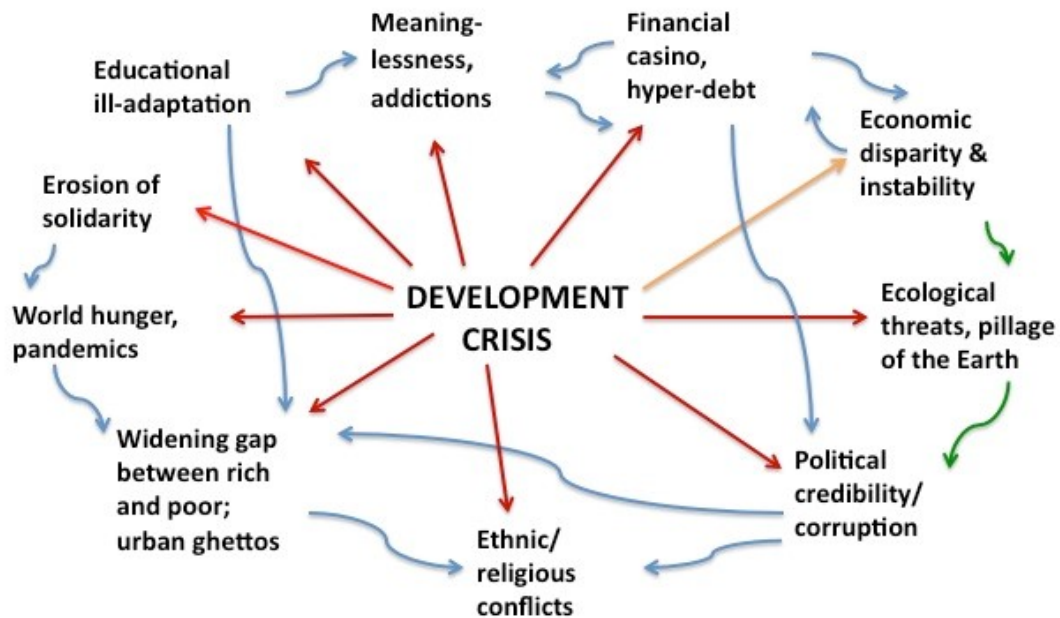
It is worth noting that in many non-Western cultures, leadership is considered a collective rather than an individual capacity. The Native American “Way of the Council”, the Australian Aborigines’ “Circle”, and the West African “Palabres” are examples of these long-standing traditions. In contrast to heroic individual leadership, co-leadership embraces the diversity of community members and of their perspectives; it frees up individual initiative and calls on collective wisdom. Indeed, new concepts and forms of leadership are emerging in countless organizations and communities around the world – in response to the increasing complexity, the poly-crisis, and the limitations of our prevailing development model. These new forms of leadership are called shared, distributed, complementary, rotating, consultative, collective, or communal. They emphasize interpersonal influence, dialogue, and mutuality – and consider leadership as a relational process rather than a position.

Such co-leadership engages simultaneously in top-down, bottom-up, diagonal, and circular change processes, and cuts across functional, organizational, geographic or even sectoral boundaries. It is used to generate open innovation that involves suppliers, customers, and even competitors (or “coopetitors”) as partners, or to address complex challenges of sustainable development by forming partnerships across companies, government, and civil society. When practiced across sectors, it creates the conditions for societal learning[10] and innovation through an increased sense of interdependence and a deeper trust in self-organization, based on shared purpose, vision, and values.

Current global crises call for a shift in the prevailing development paradigm

What Edgar Morin calls dimensions of a poly-crisis – such as global financial speculation, hyper-debt, economic disparity and instability, jobless recovery, ecological threats, the widening gap between rich and poor, ethnic or religious conflicts – can be viewed as interconnected facets of a deeper and systemic crisis of development, or as an era of mutation, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Global crises as interconnected facets of a deeper, systemic crisis of development



Inspired by Edgar Morin's *La Voie*

Our prevailing development paradigm is based largely on masculine/patriarchal values, with four self-reinforcing building blocks:

1. *A view of human nature*: one that is materialistic, driven by libido, instant gratification, utilitarianism, aggressiveness, and separateness from nature. That view is at least a century old, and was popularized by Freud and others.

2. *A domination paradigm*: domination of the many by a few, of the weak by the strong, of women by men, of nature by humans, of sensitivity by reason, of quality of life by quantity of work, of local cultures by colonizers. Some aspects of this paradigm are as old as agriculture and patriarchy; others are only a few centuries old.
3. *The quest for ongoing material growth*: can be seen through quantitative measures of progress, consumerism, glorification of greed, scarcity mentality, globalization, objectification of nature and other humans, as well as disregard/externalization of social and environmental costs. This quest started in Europe with the merchants in the Renaissance period and has become generalized in modern times. Dependence on a single currency issued by a central bank in each country has created or reinforced the sense of scarcity and competition for resources.
4. *Blind faith in free markets*: markets are deemed best to “regulate” the economy and adjacent domains – which leads to unrestrained financial capitalism and speculation, economy as war, externalization of ecological and social costs, political plutocracy, market- and performance-driven education, and privatization of healthcare and other public services or benefits. All of this has become a Western ideology in the last 30 years, widely exported through globalization.

This largely unquestioned model of development – and the corresponding growth in the number and influence of MBAs, modern economists, and financiers in the last 30 years – has led to a hypertrophy of the economy, at least in most Western countries. Many people were led to believe that a quantitatively growing economy would bring progress into their lives, and it did so for a while. In Europe, we moved 400 years ago from an “economy of salvation” (where people could buy papal indulgences to redeem their sins and go to heaven) to “salvation by the economy” (where people could buy happiness in this world). But now the economic sphere has invaded and damaged the geosphere (over-exploitation of non-renewable resources), the biosphere (deforestation, degradation of arable soil, air and water pollution, climate change), the political sphere (growth of influential lobbies and corruption), and the cultural sphere (loss of independence of mass media, education, and the arts, as well as degradation of family life).

A radically new development paradigm is needed now – one that is not based on ever-increasing material growth, but on long-term sustainability – with broader measures of individual and

collective well-being. This new paradigm offers a better balance between masculine (Yang) and feminine (Yin) values, and has the following foundations:

1. A new view of human nature as empathetic[11], relational, cooperative, searching for meaning, and looking for both differentiation and integration, or singularity and collaboration. While acknowledging the shadow side of human nature, this humanistic and spiritual perspective represents a major shift from a materialistic, individualistic, and reductionist view of humans that has prevailed for one century at least.
2. A partnership paradigm[12]: where one considers and treats others as equivalent (i.e. having equal value), generates trust through mutuality, favors flat or circular structures governed by the wise, and weaves stories that honor partnership and shared leadership as the norm. This new paradigm has been gaining ground vs. the traditional patriarchy or domination paradigm – at least in Western countries – with the increasing number of “cultural creatives” and women in influential roles, new aspirations of the younger generations, as well as the rapid growth of civil society organizations and social enterprises.
3. A quest for sustainability: while acknowledging the need to meet people’s basic material needs, the call for voluntary simplicity and measures of well being – such as Bhutan’s “Gross National Happiness” – is being heard around the world by a growing minority of people. Post-conventional consultants and economists have been proposing a richer blend of quantitative and qualitative measures of development at both organizational and societal levels. Moreover, at least five thousand complementary currencies are now used in communities around the world: With their emphasis on local exchange of value, they represent the seeds of a monetary ecology that would be much more resilient than the current system.
4. A balanced use of markets and regulation: speculative companies’ downfalls and financial market crises in the last few years have led to increasing criticism of the free-market ideology. The need for both national and international regulation and greater rigor is more widely expressed. More generally, there is a growing recognition – including among economic leaders – that simplistic and individualistic mechanisms, based on greed

and inspired by Adam Smith's concept of "the invisible hand", are not adapted to today's global complexity.

Wide adoption of this emerging paradigm depends on the level of awareness and collaboration of leaders across various sectors of society: private, public, civil, education, and media. Leaders who have the courage and ability to collaboratively embrace the challenge of "galloping complexity, multiplied by urgency" – as Doug Englebart affirms. Through their own exemplary behavior, as well as cultural and structural innovations, they can create conditions for many others to expand their own consciousness and find ways to experience a more encompassing sense of abundance in their life, while feeling co-responsible for evolution.

Within the context of a radical rethinking of education, breakthrough forms of leadership development – focused on both inner and outer changes – are critical for the diffusion of the new paradigm over the next few years, as time is our scarcest resource now. These new forms integrate the interior and exterior dimensions of change, at both individual and collective levels.

Characteristics and qualities of evolutionaries

Evolutionary co-leaders live their lives from an evolutionary perspective. The core proposition for an evolutionary worldview is best captured by Teilhard de Chardin: "We are moving! We are going forward!"[13]. In so many areas of human knowledge, we are discovering that reality is part of a vast process of change and development. We are going somewhere – we are becoming. Carter Phipps[14] affirms that the evolutionary worldview is an ontology of becoming. It is not just the world *out there* that is moving; it's also the world *in here*. Some say that we are movement itself[15]. Today the "fallacy of misplaced concreteness is slowly crumbling"[16], notably under the influence of quantum physics. Breaking the spell of solidity, though disconcerting, is ultimately quite liberating. No longer the victims of unchangeable circumstances, we find ourselves released into a vast, open-ended process that is responsive to our choices and actions. We are becoming cognizant of our own freedom – and immense responsibility.

Evolutionists strongly believe in – and are influenced by – the scientific theory of evolution[17]. Evolutionaries certainly value those insights, but they are not merely curious bystanders of the evolutionary process and passive believers in the established sciences of evolution. They are committed activists and advocates – often passionate ones – for the importance of evolution at the cultural level. They act as positive agents of change, who subscribe to the underappreciated truth that evolution, comprehensively understood, includes the individual. They have internalized evolution and appreciate it not only intellectually, but also viscerally. They recognize the vast process we are embedded in, sensing also the urgent need for our culture to evolve, and for each of us to play a positive role in that outcome.

As Carter Phipps observes, evolutionaries share three common attributes: they behave as cross-disciplinary generalists, develop the capacity to cognize the vast timescales of evolutionary history, and embody a spirit of optimism.

- **A cross-disciplinary generalist** has the capacity to look at culture’s many dimensions and to put together ideas from disparate sources. A generalist has a passionate but broad curiosity that fans across culture and sees connections, patterns, transitions, and trends, where others only see discrete facts and details. An evolutionary is able to look at the movements of nature, culture, and cosmos as a whole, yet without denying the infinite details that surround them. He/she is an interpreter *par excellence*, synthesizer, and a holistically inclined pattern recognizer. He/she recognizes that the world is increasingly fragmented[18] and that we must embrace our role in jump-starting the process of reintegration[19]. However, the generalist remains a rare breed and the evolutionary generalist even more so. “There are few who have the capacity or inclination to speak for the culture as a whole” – as Craig Eisendrath notes. Being an evolutionary generalist is more than simply being a pluralist – one who makes space for multiple perspectives and points of view. Integrative, cross-disciplinary thinking may be an evolutionary adaptation to the challenges presented by our globalizing, ever-complexifying society. Jean Gebser called this new consciousness “integral” – characterized by an aperspectival quality, meaning that it contains a way of seeing reality that transcends the segmentation and fragmentation of the mental/rational worldview. Sri Aurobindo called “higher mind” the capacity to take in knowledge by intuitively perceiving it as a whole – an all-at-once

perception of multiple ideas grasped simultaneously as a unified truth. Ken Wilber[20] has preferred the term “vision-logic” to describe this curious mixture of visionary revelation, combined with conceptual and logical analysis. Thus, the very faculties we use to perceive the world are themselves caught up in the evolutionary process.

- **Deep thoughts in deep times:** An evolutionary looks at reality through the lens of what Carter Phipps calls *evolutionary time*. Generally, we cannot perceive evolution in our own time scale. We must think with a unique kind of historical context. Teilhard de Chardin suggested that the capacity to “see in deep time” is an emergent potential of the species. Perhaps we are just beginning to develop the capacity to “see” in four dimensions[21]. It is almost as if a new form of spiritual intuition is dawning upon those with the inner openness to perceive it. Through this evolutionary awakening, the individual feels connected to the developmental, in-process, unfolding nature of his or her own consciousness, of the culture, of life and even of the cosmos itself. The spell of solidity is broken deep down in the psyche and a new vision of an evolving world pours forth, an epiphany not just of unity and oneness, but of movement and temporality.
- **Deep optimism:** Evolutionaries demonstrate a profound faith in and commitment to the future. They radiate a deep and powerful optimism. They know that evolution is at work in the process of consciousness and culture, and that we can place our own hands on the levers of these processes and make a positive impact. They evidence confidence, and they transmit that confidence to others. That confidence carries with it a conviction[22] that reaches beyond any quality found only within the boundaries of the personality – a quality of basic trust in life’s process, flow, deep peace, and of transcendent being. It is as if the essence of the process itself – its creativity, dynamism, and forward movement – comes alive in the personality of those who have embraced an evolutionary worldview. In the hearts of evolutionaries, the future is already bright.

Qualities of leadership in vibrant communities

Surveys of more than 2400 communities in 92 countries – undertaken by the Institute for Strategic Clarity[23] with the initial input of the Global Transforming Ensemble – show that about 15% of them report a high level of well being and a feeling of abundance or harmonic vibrancy. Members of these groups experience simultaneously a high quality of relationship to self (freedom for self-expression), to others in the group (mutuality), to the larger human community (contribution, service, care), to nature (respect and balance), and to spirit (meaning and evolution). When the dynamics of harmonic vibrancy are at work, there is a positive connection between the ability to self-sustain and to self-determine, a sense of cultural identity, effectiveness of social structures and processes, strength of the social fabric, and available economic opportunities.

The level of harmonic vibrancy in the collective is influenced by the quality of leadership that can be characterized by several interior conditions: being acutely aware of one's own beliefs, attitudes, and behavior; having a sense of profound interdependence; opening up to inspiration and guidance from the larger field; trusting life's processes and evolution; having a beginner's mind; being humble and willing to learn – with a sense of humor and playfulness; paying attention to the quality of relationship with self, others, and the larger whole; valuing diverse and complementary views, gifts, and skills; and being willing to partner and to be of service.

The 3H model of presence-centered, evolutionary leadership developed with my colleagues of the Global Transforming Ensemble clusters a number of these qualities around three energy centers: Head, Heart, and Hara – in relationship to self, others, and the whole. Each center corresponds to an aspect of the emerging forms of evolutionary co-leadership we observe in the field: awareness-based, love-infused, and presence-centered. These qualities are illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2. 3H Model of Evolutionary Co-leadership

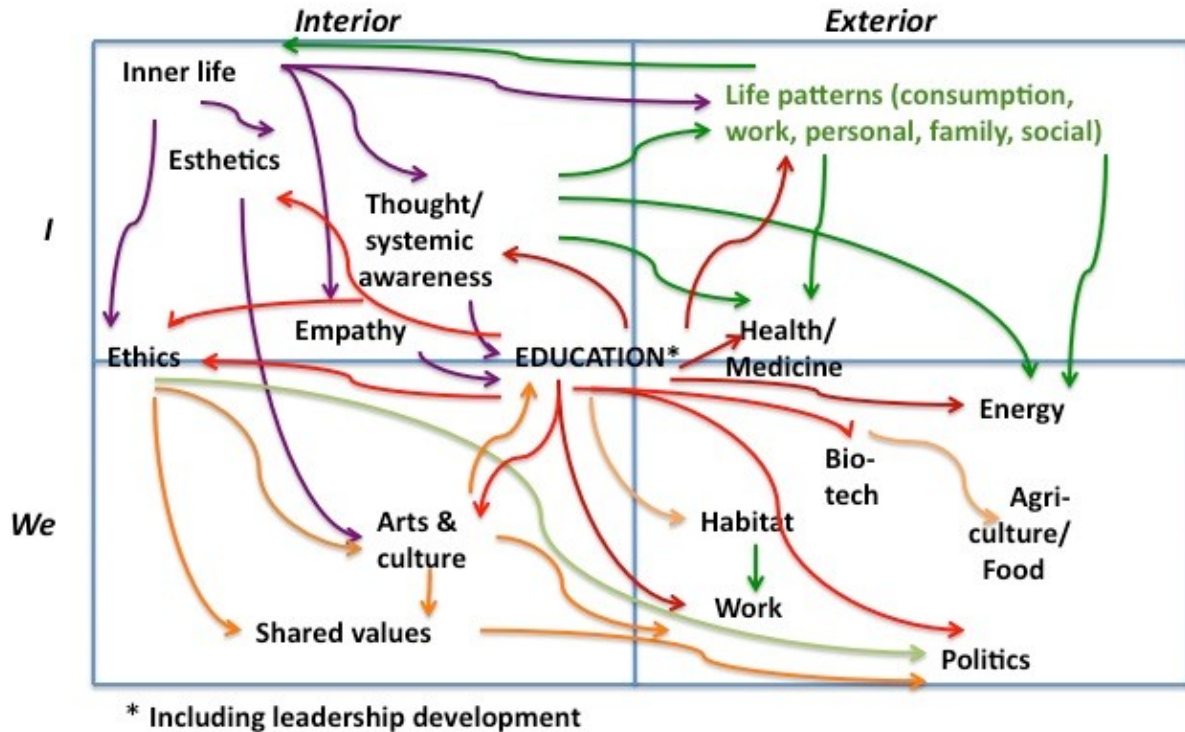
Energy centers	Relationship to oneself	Relationship to others	Relationship to the whole
Head Center <i>Awareness-based</i>	Mentally clear Conscious Attentive Intuitive	Valuing multiple perspectives Action Inquiry Alignment	Global vision Clarity about interconnection
Heart Center <i>Love-infused</i>	Sensitive Connected to feelings Open, non-judgmental	Heartfelt and ethical relationships Empathetic listening Attunement Courage	Global compassion Sense of service
Hara Center <i>Presence-centered</i>	Embodied intent Grounded Self-sufficient and receptive	Shared presence Root connection Entrainment	Globally-informed right action Sensing the field

Source: Global Transforming Ensemble

Leadership development as a leverage point within a radical reframing of education

On a global level, a transformation of education in all its aspects: 1) parental education, 2) primary, secondary and tertiary education, 3) management and leadership development, 4) influential media programming, and 5) life-long learning – would offer the largest multiplying effects on both individual interiority and behavior, as well as culture, systems, and structures. Indeed, the quality of education affects all domains of human experience: awareness, empathy, aesthetics, ethics, values, relationships, the arts, health, eating habits, energy uses, habitat, work, business practices, political choices, etc., as illustrated by Figure 3.

Figure 3. High multiplier effect of educational transformation



Inspired by Edgar Morin's *La Voie* and Ken Wilber's *Four Quadrants*

However, this transformation requires a radical re-thinking of our current educational assumptions – as well as the collaboration of many individual leaders and institutions – while building on the many experiments and alternatives that are already in existence and growing.

One of the key aspects of this transformation is a shift from the predominance of rational learning to a wholesome balance among cognitive knowledge, development of the capacity to love, and liberation of spontaneity – what Claudio Naranjo[24] calls a tri-focal education. To heal individual consciousness – and our civilization – from the consequences of thousands of years of patriarchy and at least 30 years of materialistic excesses, education needs to foster a massive psycho-spiritual development of the population, starting with individuals who aspire to currently hold a leadership role.

A new view of human nature, as well as a newly conceived educational paradigm, in its various forms – will be both nurturing and challenging – and will develop empathy and emotional maturity, appreciative inquiry, participative observation, collaborative learning, environmental, and social literacy – through shared pedagogical experience and facilitative teaching. It will enable every person to become more aware of his/her own true gifts, with the willingness to offer them in service to the community. From a developmental perspective, this educational transformation will cultivate the integral ability to: be present to what is; embrace a systemic perspective; search for inclusive responses in the midst of ambiguity and paradoxes; and promote responsibility for authoring one's life, while also caring for the whole.

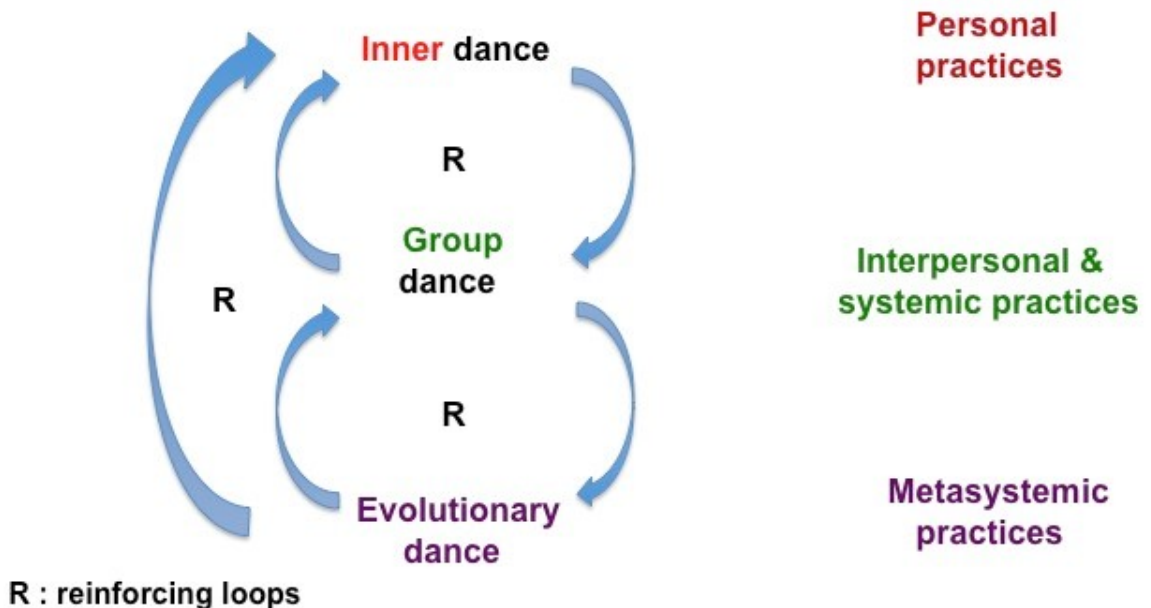
Within that specifically broader context, new forms of leadership development will enable leaders to adopt integral practices at three levels that reinforce each other, support personal, organizational, and societal transformation, and give access to internal guidance and collective wisdom:

1. *Personal practices* include various forms of individual action inquiry that develop one's openness, humility, presence to what is, a sense of deep interconnectedness, and exemplarity as a leader. These practices range from journaling, challenging one's beliefs and assumptions[25], sustained shadow work, opening one's heart and connecting to one's essential self, deepening one's inner knowing through body-heart-mind integration, choosing to stop struggling by having faith in evolution, valuing each stage of development, seeking support from a peer group, slowing down and focusing on the present through chi gong or tai chi, to working with improvisation.
2. *Interpersonal practices* encompass multiple forms of collaborative inquiry such as empathetic listening, compassionate confrontation, reflective and generative dialogue, approaching conflicts as opportunities to learn, working creatively with polarities[26], dilemmas and paradoxes, co-hosting in a sacred place, mutual awakening[27], and undertaking intercultural journeys in a small group.
3. *Systemic practices* include: building a shared vision with diverse partners and stakeholders[15]; functioning as a high-performance team through shared intentionality and a common but flexible approach; co-designing collective spaces and processes; adopting

liberating microstructures[28] in daily work that free individual creativity and call on collective wisdom; using collaborative approaches such as the World Café or Open Space; bringing a microcosm of the whole system in the same room; setting up the conditions and processes for open innovation across organizational or sectoral boundaries – with a combination of singularity and collaboration.

These three sets of practices reinforce each other and enable co-leaders to enter into the three dances mentioned earlier: an inner dance, a group dance, and an evolutionary dance, which can be ever deepened and expanded in a “figure 8”, as illustrated in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Inner and external dances of evolutionary co-leadership



The development of evolutionary co-leadership can be accelerated and amplified

Several directions already exist or are emerging to disseminate evolutionary co-leadership on a large scale in the next few years. They range from offering breakthrough secondary and tertiary education for future leaders to supporting/connecting evolutionary leadership development programs, to identifying/showcasing evolutionary leaders, and to augmenting the public reach of “better world” organizations and movements.

1. **Embed radically new content and pedagogy** – based on the emerging paradigm of development. New world universities are preparing young leaders in various fields for tomorrow’s needs. For example, Ubiquity University launched its first online program in May 2015 – planning to ultimately reach millions of young people from low-income families in many countries who, until now, could not dream of having access to an accredited world-class higher education. It promotes whole-brain whole- system learning with a social innovation platform, and concentrates on what the emerging generation of students actually needs – modular competency-based learning experiences that foster collaborative creativity and entrepreneurial leadership. In addition to lectures and tests, courses are comprised of personal development exercises, real life missions, and game scenarios designed for the multi-sensory student. Some of the webinars offered by organizations such as the Shift Network[29], Evolving Wisdom[30], and the Evolutionary Collective[31] also represent breakthroughs in transformational education.
2. **Expand the number, reach, and interconnections of educational programs** that are already developing evolutionary or global leadership in a number of countries. The Global Leadership Network[32] initiated a first survey of 30 such programs in 2008, and the report on Global Leadership Development Programs highlights common characteristics, unmet needs, and some of the next steps that could be taken. Among those are the incorporation of more evolutionary components in management school programs, the development of qualified teachers/facilitators, and the accessibility of programs to a greater number of underprivileged local leaders.

3. **Identify, connect, support, and globally showcase the many leaders** who are already practicing new forms of leadership in social enterprises, alternative companies, NGOs, and local or virtual communities. A number of for-benefit organizations and networks – such as the Presencing Institute, The World Café Foundation, The Art of Hosting, the Buckminster Fuller Institute, Ashoka, the Institute for Strategic Clarity, and the Club of Budapest, – are already supporting work in that direction. Some of them are investigating ways to leverage similar initiatives on a global scale.

4. **Enhance communication, sharing of practices, coordination, and collaboration among respected organizations and networks** across the fields of conscious evolution, peace, justice, social innovation, sustainability, and wise use of technology. The number and reach of such organizations have greatly increased in the last few years, but their influence on the dissemination and embodiment of a new development paradigm has often been limited – culturally and geographically – by their lack of funding and management capability, as well as by the fragmentation of the field. To help reach a critical mass in terms of world audience and effectiveness, a co-creative process has recently been launched among organizations that share similar values and are most open to cooperation. Based on a groundbreaking communication and collaboration platform, this initiative would both allow a more effective use of the resources that are available and attract new funding in the 2015-2017 timeframe – years that may prove to be critical for birthing a civilization based on this emerging paradigm.

In conclusion,

there are already many signs of an evolution toward a more collaborative and creative society in the intellectual, cultural, social, and economic domains. All of these trends can be viewed as encouraging in a world that is still largely characterized by the domination of privileged groups, as well as by the reluctant acceptance by many people of life conditions that do not allow the development of their talents and the expression of their creativity. For these positive trends to be amplified and extended to other domains – for the benefit of the greatest number of people on

this precious planet – it is essential that evolutionary co-leadership be embodied and disseminated at all levels of society.

Wide adoption of a new development paradigm – and of the forms of co-leadership that underlie it – depends on the level of awareness and cooperation of vanguard leaders across various sectors of society: private, public, civil, education, and media, locally and globally. Through their own exemplary behavior – as well as designing or supporting cultural and structural innovations – evolutionary co-leaders can create conditions for many others to become conscious of their creative potential and to experience synergy with others, along with a more encompassing sense of abundance in their life.

Evolutionary co-leadership allows by its very nature the multiplication of creative actions in service of the whole – which will be necessary to reach a critical mass more quickly. Applying it on a large scale will be crucial for accelerating humanity’s shift to become more conscious of its evolutionary responsibility. A much longer period of transition would be necessary if we pursued only the development of individual leadership – which currently involves a limited number of people. Co-leadership is intrinsically evolutionary and integral because it accelerates the development of both people and organizations – that in turn contribute to evolution, in a virtuous loop.

What individual and collective choices can we make to act from an evolutionary co-leadership perspective and thus further catalyze and amplify the emergence of a co-creative society? And what can we learn from those who have already chosen that path?

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About the Author

Alain Gauthier is an international consultant, facilitator, coach, author, and educator, Alain focuses his work on developing co-leadership and partnering capabilities in and across the public, private, and civil society sectors. He is passionate about integrating the inner and outer dimensions of co-leadership, both at the individual and collective levels, in the service of a new development paradigm. A graduate from H.E.C. (Paris), Stanford University M.B.A., and former senior consultant at McKinsey & Company, Gauthier has served for more than 40 years a wide range of clients on three continents. He is the author of the ebook *Actualizing Evolutionary Co-leadership to Catalyze an Emerging Creative Society* and contributed to five collective books on

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Footnotes

- [1] Barbara Marx Hubbard, *Emergence: The Shift from Ego to Essence*, 2012
- [2] Patrick Viveret, "Osons un désir d'humanité" in Dartiguepeyrou, C., (éd), *Les Voies de la résilience*, L'Harmattan, Paris, 2012 – a book about connecting with our humanness and our resiliency.
- [3] Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline – The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*, Revised Edition, Doubleday Currency, 2006.
- [4] Inspired by the innovation diffusion model proposed par Everett M. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovation – 5th Edition*, 2003.
- [5] Lao Tse and Walter Gorn-Old, *The Tao Te King*, Wilder Publications, Radford, 2008.
- [6] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, New World Library, Novato, 2008.
- [7] Steven Gilligan and Robert Dilts, R., *The Hero's Journey: A Voyage of Self-Discovery*, Crown House, 2009.
- [8] Ervin Laszlo and Gyorgyi Szabo, *Declaration of Oneness*, Club de Budapest
<http://www.clubdebudapest.org/index.php/declaration-dunite.html>
- [9] Petra Künkel, *Collective Leadership – A Pathway to Collective Intelligence*, Collective Leadership Institute, 2005.
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- [10] Societal learning transcends and includes individual and organizational learning. Learning individually and collectively often requires unlearning and questioning habits of thought and behavior.
- [11] Jeremy Rifkin, *The Empathetic Civilization: The Race to Global Consciousness in a World in Crisis*, Jeremy Tarcher/Penguin, 2009.
- [12] Riane Eisler, *The Power of Partnership*, New World Library, Novato, 2008.
- [13] Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Future of Man*, Doubleday, 2004. He also wrote: “Evolution is a light that illuminates all facts, a curve that all lines must follow.”
- [14] Phipps, Carter, *Evolutionaries: Unlocking the Spiritual and Cultural Potential of Science’s Greatest Idea*, Harper Collins, New York, 2012.
- [15] Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 2012. “Life in general is mobility itself...The essence of life is in the movement by which life is transmitted.”
- [16] Alfred North Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*, Free Press, New York, 1997.
- [17] In contrast with “creationists” or “biblical literalists.”
- [18] René Descartes broke the world in two, with multiple reverberations. Out of the radical split between subject and object, between man and nature, came modern world and all its wonders and we gained the power of specialization. Now we are data rich and meaning poor.
- [19] See Edgar Morin’s *La Voie*, Editions Fayard, Paris, 2011 and *Seven Complex Lessons in Education for the Future*, UNESCO, 2001.
- [20] Ken Wilber, *A Theory of Everything: An Integral Vision for Business, Politics, Science and Spirituality*, Shambhala, New York, 2001.
- [21] “Just as we separate in space, we fix in time. The intellect is not made to ‘think’ evolution.” (Henri Bergson)

- [22] It is a conviction not only in the fact of evolution but in the wholesomeness of the evolutionary process, despite the suffering, conflict, and chaos it inevitably entails.
- [23] <http://instituteforstrategicclarity.org>
- [24] Claudio Naranjo and Jean Houston, *Healing Civilization*, One World Press, Chino Valley, 2011.
- [25] Robert Kegan and Lisa Lahey, *Immunity to Change: How to Overcome it and Unlock the Potential in Yourself and Your Organization*, 2009.
- [26] Barry Johnson, *Polarity Management: Identifying and Managing Unsolvable Problems*, 1992.
- [27] As developed by Patricia Albere:
<http://evolutionarycollective.com/courses/mutualawakening/mutual-awakening-elearning-course-new-york-city/>
- [28] Henri Lipmanowicz and Keith McCandless, *The Surprising Power of Liberating Structures Simple Rules to Unleash a Culture of Innovation*, Kindle eBook, 2014.
- [29] <http://theshiftnetwork.com>
- [30] <http://evolvingwisdom.com>
- [31] <http://evolutionarycollective.com>
- [32] <http://www.globalleadershipnetwork.net/projects/projects/550>