


A FRESH PERSPECTIVE FOR TODAY'S LEADERS

engaging the edges™

Foresight Issue

Featuring tips to break through complexity for yourself and your team.

 interworks



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welcome to your future

Welcome to your future. A future that is relational, integrated, coherent and holistic. The theme of this issue of Engaging the Edges is future-thinking and we believe our best future depends on it.

Quantum science has proven that relational dynamics are at work way beyond what we knew. This is already influencing new models for leadership, organizational structures, teaming and much more. We now know that the relationship between things is our future, not the things themselves. The “intera” element in our name came from another of these future attributes which is integrated. It is a key distinction in our content, facilitation and approach for transformational learning and development at all levels.

What does this future look like inside companies? Individuals are the source of power in the organization. No team exists without individuals. No project exists without the capacity a team can generate. No objective is achievable without the power of a team collaborating. No organization can exist without the power of shared intentions, shared objectives, shared vision. Relational and integrated. Coherent and holistic.

The real question is can we go beyond that and create our future and the conditions in which it occurs and if so, how? What are we creating right now, or not? Explore future-thinking and its applications in our feature article, *Creating Organizations of the Future* by InteraWorks Director of Practice, Anne-McGhee Stinson.

Three years ago, our team at InteraWorks created a vision for our future before our brand, our team and our current portfolio even existed. Upon review earlier this year, we realized that most of it has manifested. Some came about due to our intention and sheer will, and some was clearly the result of the unexpected reality, quantum even. At our 2023 summer all-hands retreat, we collaborated to create a new 5-year vision and are open to what occurs as we create along the way.

This is one form of future thinking. Another is Scenario Planning, a proven process for imagining various futures and the implications of each as a team. We leveraged it during the pandemic, and this is now a new offering by InteraWorks. You'll find more in the blog inside on this topic. Several of us also had the opportunity to participate in a Foresight Leadership program which is another futurist practice that can include a variety of practices, tools and modeling using data, trends, and uncertainty to bring more of your future into the now and vice versa.

That's what we will all be up to in the years to come in every facet of our lives and business. We know how to learn from the past and bring the past into the present and even to focus and activate the present into future results. But creating our own collective future and the conditions in that future? We can and we will.

We are ready and committed to that and hope you'll join us. At whatever level or next-level you are ready for, incorporate more future-thinking into your processes. If we've learned nothing else, the value of foresight is no longer optional.

Sincerely,

Laurie Oswald, CEO



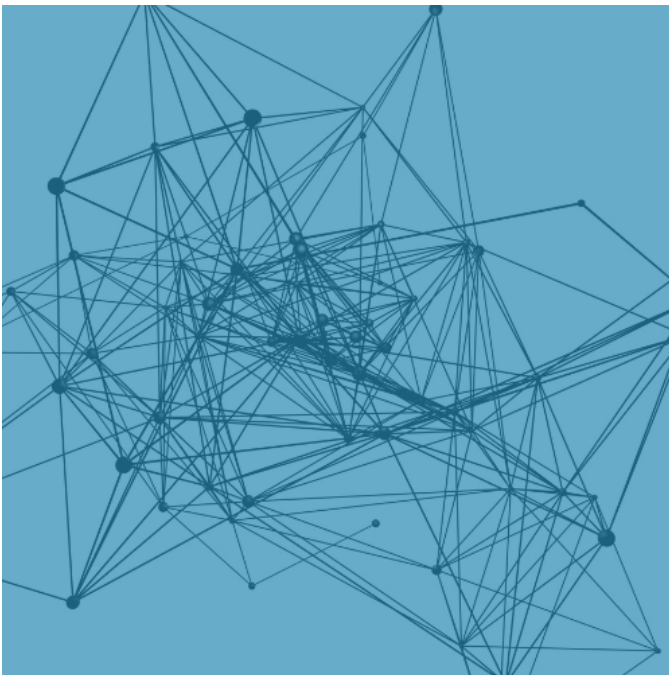
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Never mistake a
short



clear view for a
distance.



Leading & Learning

Creating Organizations of the Future – Now.

PREPARED BY

Anne McGhee-Stinson, Director of Practice



intera**works**

Today we stand on the edge of a new reality-an unknown world rife with complexity, ambiguity, and even chaos. Confronting the future's uncertainty can leave us feeling frustrated and devoid of resources. As the rate of change continues to soar, scientific trends reveal the need for new organizational approaches-especially in how we lead and learn.

Worldwide the Learning and Development field is experiencing massive transformation at an unprecedented pace. Social, economic, environmental, and political systems, and the blistering rate at which technology is advancing, add to the complex stew within which the world must navigate.

As technology advances, our environment rapidly changes-often, exceeding the human ability to adapt creates radical challenges for individuals - making the need for new styles of learning, leading, teaching, and training critical, if not essential, to gaining success in this new world. Not only must we redefine and expand how we connect, but we must reconsider what skills are necessary to lead and operate in this novel age.

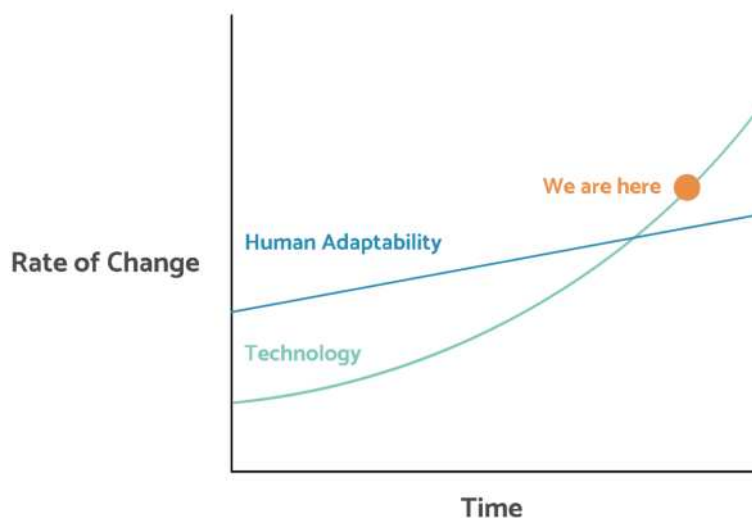
Another consideration is to explore how we lift the slope of adaptability to meet the changes in our world. We can adapt our technology to serve us rather than being a servant to it, but to accelerate our learning to catch up to the trajectory of the technology curve, we must first understand what is at stake and be willing to shift 3 critical aspects of our mindset and our approach.

Shift #1 - Let Go

The old model of work is based on a wholly mechanistic paradigm of Newtonian Physics where everything can be taken apart and put back together again. The more we understand the individual parts, the better those individual parts will work and work together. This paradigm served to inform how we organized education, healthcare, governments, and businesses. It is the embodiment of the Industrial Age mentality: everything is predictable, and all processes are linear. Consider the assumptions that are part of this paradigm:

- Change / Chaos / Disruption to be avoided at all costs.
- Understanding the parts = understanding the whole.
- People need to be motivated by rewards and/or punishments.
- Experts are needed to educate the masses.
- Predictability and stability are the goals.
- Workers are treated as cogs in a machine.
- Power flows from the top down.
- Decision-making is the leader's imperative.

Today's dominant organizational strategies are based on incomplete and archaic premises aiming to maintain stability and avoid uncertainties. Considering the volatility of our changing world, this approach is no longer adequate or advisable. The predictable past is no guide for the unpredictable future.



Google X's Astro Teller's diagram shows human adaptability is unable to keep up with exponential technology.

In short, to thrive in this increasingly complex world, we will have to leave our familiar cause-and-effect “left-brain” thinking behind and walk toward a more innovative and creative “whole brain” frontier.

Leaders of the 21st century need the training to help them work effectively and lead powerfully. We must expand their paradigms and mindsets so they can better adapt to the demands of this complex, multi-generational, multi-cultural workforce. Our current and future environments require that leaders lean into creativity and flexibility. The ability for leaders to create meaningful work has never been more necessary than it is right now. This is the key to keeping teams engaged and serving clients with excellence.

Shift #2 – Lean In

Human beings are uniquely equipped to unravel complexity and ambiguity. Many of our business models are based on an outdated mechanistic model, but what we now know is that businesses are living ecosystems and living systems operate differently than mechanical systems. We need an evolved organizational framework to accommodate this reality and at the same time evolve our capacities for high-order learning and thinking. To do so, we must now be willing to draw on a multi-disciplinary approach informed by

the sciences of our time to be able to adequately address the issues that confront us.

While the situations and scenarios may be complex and unpredictable, thankfully, the solutions are not. Learning and development curriculums can and will evolve to elevate and accelerate the way we learn. They must include the essential tools and training necessary to cope with the high demand for critical thinking. They must also harness the ability to focus one’s mind on desired outcomes in the face of ever evolving and complex scenarios.

But what we do know is that we will not be able to resolve mechanistic, left-brained, cause-and-effect, predictable construct. The mindset is incomplete and out of date. As author Ralph Kilmann says in *Creating a Quantum Organization*, “It is time to stop perpetuating the myth of simplicity. The system of organization established by humankind generates complex problems that cannot be solved by simplistic quick-fix solutions.”

Information technology and worldwide connectivity have created an increasingly dynamic and interconnected world while political deregulation and economic interdependence have created an increasingly complex world.

Amidst an evolutionary age requiring us to change our mental models and even our entire worldview, what is needed most are organizations that are motivated to learn how to learn; organizations that embed distributed decision-making at all levels. Leaders must listen to a wide variety of insights and draw upon the learning of the people inside the organization. In this complex, ambiguous and uncertain world, the ideal role of leaders is to facilitate and coordinate communication channels spontaneously to promote and/or organize solutions utilizing the collective intelligence of the group.

“We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them.”

- Albert Einstein

Shift #3 – Embrace Change

Comparing the world to a machine argues for simple efforts at change and improvement, like replacing one defective part in some mechanistic device and expecting that to improve the overall function of the system. This model may have been appropriate in the industrial age where there were a few educated people whose responsibilities included managing and directing a host of mostly under-educated assembly line workers. Today, everyone is educated and has access to information, data, and learning from billions of sources. In this new era where technology, complexity, and ambiguity reign, a leader's ability to manage ecosystems, human responses, and exercise judgment in decision-making is key to an organization's success.

The last several years served as a real-life demonstration of how decision-making is optimized when leaders are willing to consider what is happening below the surface of the chaos. The impact of human emotion on the decision-making process is immense. There is no way to disentangle emotions from decision-making. Timing and context also influence our decision-making efforts. Effective decision-making requires us to tap into traits such as empathy, wisdom, compassion, kindness, and care. This helps us holistically view our systems. When we do this, we are more likely to make decisions collectively, rationally, and effectively.

This leads us to believe that the solutions to learning and leading are heavily impacted by developing learning cultures where individuals are more interconnected, interdependent, integrated, holistic, and relational; organizations where not only the individual components are taken into consideration, but the most important focus must be on the RELATIONSHIP between those components.

Increasing Complexity

Today's setting offers us an exciting opportunity to broaden this perspective by creating learning environments to develop and refine deeply human traits and relationships.

These innovative environments draw upon the collective intelligence and wisdom of the assembled learners. The prospect for truly diverse groups to come together when engaging in rapid learning (and un-learning), making connections, and discovering emergent solutions is the opportunity before us.

This is an entirely new paradigm for leading and learning; one that fundamentally shifts our worldview. Leaders in organizations, educational institutions, governments, and healthcare systems, all must now shift our approach to how we might lead and learn to create the organizations of the future – now.

What can leaders do now?

What is the benefit to the organization?

As Daniel Goleman, author of Emotional Intelligence states in a recent Harvard Business Review article: "Recognize that now more than ever, your state of "being" as a leader will impact others. When we consciously or unconsciously

"Leading effectively is less about mastering situations—or even mastering social skill sets—than about developing a genuine interest in and talent for fostering positive feelings in the people whose cooperation and support you need."

- Daniel Goleman

detect someone else's emotions through their actions, we [unconsciously] reproduce those emotions. Collectively, we create an instant sense of shared experience. [These connections] have particular importance in crisis because leaders' emotions and actions prompt others to mirror those feelings and deeds.

The exciting opportunity this presents is that leading and learning become focused on building more symbiotic relationships between organizations and people. Relationships where organizations thrive because of the people in them, and people thrive because of the environment organizations have created. The following are four transformation initiatives and the benefits that ensue:

Develop an Inclusive Leadership

- Promotes alignment, engagement, and commitment to shared goals.
- Generates innovation and problem-solving.
- Distributes decision-making.
- Broadens perspectives and deepens relationships.

Generate open flows of information and flexible hierarchies

- Provide a high degree of visibility and transparency on information flow.
- Enables cross-functional teaming as teams may form and then dissolve as the workflow becomes more fluid.
- Demonstrates and embeds trust and a sense of community within the team.
- Deepens relationships as members get to know each other in new ways.

Create a Learning Organization

- Integrates performance and development into one "conversation."
- People are constantly growing and developing their skills.
- Knowledge and skills are shared and practiced.
- Meaning and purpose are part of the work-life experience.

Practice a Growth Mindset

- Demonstrates ability to adapt to rapidly changing environments.
- Enhances innovation and creativity as the aperture opens.
- Increases our sense of well-being.
- Improves diversity and inclusion.

Complexity has always existed, of course—and business life has always featured the unpredictable, the surprising, and the unexpected. But the level of complexity has gone from something found mainly in large systems, such as cities, to something that affects almost everything we touch: the products we design, the jobs we do every day, and the teams we oversee.

We can choose an evolved paradigm and change the way we think about leading and learning, and when we do we realize that we can deliberately shape our future by creating deeper relationships with one another. As it turns out, it is empowering the human connection, that will enable our future. Together we will accomplish amazing things.



"Whether you're trying to become more innovative, agile, or inclusive, changing culture is really a matter of changing shared everyday habits. Those habits are motivated by clear principles, reinforced by congruent systems, and modeled by leaders across the organization."

Challenge



Unprecedented Change

Social, economic, environmental, political systems, and advancing technology demand accelerated learning models, resilient leaders, and organizational flexibility.

Shift
1



Let Go

As the world gets more complex, we will have to adapt from our familiar cause and effect “left-brain” thinking to more innovative and creative “whole-brain” thinking.

Shift
2



Lean In

Leaders faced with this complexity, ambiguity, and uncertainty must facilitate and coordinate communication to draw on the collective intelligence of the group.

Creating Organizations of the Future

Shift
3



Embrace Change

A leader’s ability to manage ecosystems, human responses, and exercise judgement in decision-making is key to an organization’s success.

Solution



What can you do now?

- Develop an Inclusive Leadership
- Generate open flows of information and flexible hierarchies
- Create a Learning Organization
- Practice a Growth Mindset



Celebrating Growth!

InteraWorks continues to expand with the 2022 acquisition of Denver-based McGhee Productivity Solutions. The addition moves InteraWorks and our mission forward on multiple fronts as we continues to redefine learning and development in the workplace.

McGhee Productivity Solutions is a longtime industry leader in helping enterprise companies create cultures of productivity through coaching, training, and change management programs. They are well known around the world for their Take Back Your Life! productivity programs and thought leadership as well as planning and accountability programs for teams, executive coaching, and more.

“Our businesses share a commitment to helping organizations and the people in them generate more of the results they want in business and in life,” said InteraWorks CEO Laurie Oswald. “InteraWorks is now more well-positioned than ever to help companies who value their human capital most of all to develop, engage, and empower the leaders of tomorrow.” InteraWorks Managing Partner Anne McGhee-Stinson shared, “Our collective portfolios are meant to be together particularly to serve our clients and the challenges they face at this time.” Laurie added, “The combined company reflects an expansion of capacity, content, technology, ideas, geographic coverage, and terrific additions to our talented team.”

To learn more about our expansion contact us:
info@interaworks.com



Leadership Lessons from The Iditarod

Jennifer Wilmoth, Relationship Lead + Facilitator

Many years ago, when travel was routine for me, I was reading an inflight magazine about a sled dog race called the Iditarod. It was started in 1973 to preserve the culture of the sled dog as well as the historical Iditarod Trail between Seward and Nome in Alaska. I was hooked by a competition where neither gender nor age mattered, it was how you cared for, listened to, and lead your team that won the race.

This year was the 50th Iditarod race and what I love about this competition, not only is it about the happiest dogs ever, but also about leadership, grit, trust, and courage – from both dog and musher.

During this year's race, it occurred to me that there were lessons to be learned from the relationship between Musher and their dog team. Although their challenges look vastly different from most of ours (I've never had to bang pots to see if that might be the solution to move a herd of Moose from my path), I still felt as though I could relate (what tools do I have that might be the solution to bring an incongruent team into alignment?). As I share the following learnings from the Iditarod Mushers, consider which lessons could you apply in the way you develop or engage in "team" with your organization, community, or family.

Many mushers start the race with a plan. Some, several plans. Then when called for, they scrap the plan and adapt to the weather, trail conditions, and what the dogs need.

Veteran dogs combined with younger dogs make a strong team while also preparing for the future.

Attention and focus are paramount to success – and ensure the sled remains upright. (The stories of mushers falling asleep while leading never end well – literally and figuratively falling asleep!)

Resting is a game-winning strategy of the race.

For much of the race, the mushers eat and sleep on the trail alongside their dog team.

The team will conquer 1,000 miles in the vast Alaskan Wilderness; the musher and the dogs celebrate their arrival at each checkpoint along the way.

A musher can only race as fast as the slowest dog. Sometimes they carry that dog in the sled to recuperate and other times they leave the dog safely behind at a checkpoint.

Speed is the name of the game. But never, ever, at the cost of a dog's health. The dog's well-being will always, forever, and in every circumstance come before the win.

Mushers know that their dogs will give everything they have when the team can rely on their leader to demonstrate love, protection, and a clear direction.

Each dog is fueled to run by its own intrinsic motivation and a good musher knows how to identify, foster, and develop that which will ignite the passion of each dog.

The musher's position is in a sled behind their dogs. When the team crosses the finish line, the dogs come through first pulling their leader behind them.

At the finish line, one Musher was asked if one dog stood out: "They are all unique and I love each one; everyone has a different personality, different mark, different attitude... With all of us working together it makes a team." Perhaps their approach to leadership will inspire you to consider ways that you too can lead powerfully from your heart.



Recently several of our team members sat in on a conversation between 2 people who are passionate about human issues in the workplace. It became a conversation starter for a bigger discussion around the recent shift as large organizations look to incorporate more empathetic approaches. This conversation took place between the CEO of Neuroscience Leadership Institute, Dr. David Rock, and David Gelles author of *The Man Who Broke Capitalism*.

How can a company make profits and also have a soul?

It's similar to the challenge many of our learners face on an individual level: "How can we be more empathetic toward our colleagues and still get the job done?"

It's a valid question and one we discuss regularly in our Activating Empathy program in which we accept the challenging conversation along with Dr. Rock who shares some of the neuroscience behind potential "soul-killing" blind spots for people and organizations:

Goals win out over people.

The prefrontal cortex of our brain is where the unique attributes of human-being reside. These attributes include insight, morality, intuition, emotional balance, attuned communication, and empathy - Yet, this part of the brain switches *off* when we think of goals and plans. Plans, goals, and other conceptual thinking are located in another area of the brain entirely. People do need to stay focused on goals and outcomes, but it raises a challenge if goals are the only thing in mind when interacting with team members and stakeholders. In our very goal-oriented culture, this can lead to less empathetic interactions.

Activating Empathy

Not every interaction needs to be goal-oriented. Connecting with team members on a personal basis can go a long way toward establishing the foundation for empathy. This might mean spending a few minutes before a meeting catching up on personal items, checking in on how people are doing, meeting outside of work when possible, or even creating some unstructured time with team members during the week.

Empathy is confused with Sympathy.

There has been much talk recently on empathy. Yet, what we are learning is that often, what is being taught as empathy may NOT be empathy at all. Sympathizing, comforting, commiserating, agreeing, and "fixing" are frequently confused with true empathy and can create conflicting results. True empathy starts with **tuning in to** what is going on emotionally with another person. The ability to sense what other people are feeling is an important factor in allowing us to connect or communicate effectively with empathy.



Try this Empathy Quiz

See if you can identify the non-empathetic responses.

"I am having a hard time thinking clearly these days- it's like my mind can't make a decision!"

- A) "Well, you are doing everything you can, it's not your fault."
- B) "Hey – overwhelm is just the nature of the business we're in."
- C) "That sounds overwhelming, especially considering the role you're in and changes you've been dealing with lately."
- D) "There are actually 3 big decisions you need to make this week."
- E) "You poor thing."
- F) "What exactly have you done to clear your head?"
- G) "Oh, last week I was in decision meetings back-to-back."

Understanding ≠ Empathy

Although we may sense what another is feeling, we may not always understand their emotional state from an intellectual perspective– and we do not have to in order to be empathetic. Feelings are incredibly complex and rarely logical. In our effort to understand intellectually, we can more easily lose the thin thread of true empathy. Understanding requires us to analyze, conceptualize, investigate, conjecture, etc...Once again, this activates a different part of the brain than the area responsible for empathy.


Activating Empathy

Acknowledge feelings are a part of the human experience at work; feelings are just feelings. They don't have to be explained or justified. Sometimes just acknowledging what another is feeling is a profound step in the right direction toward empathy.

At InteraWorks we subscribe to a Holographic Organizational model, wherein what is true for the individual member is reflected throughout the organization. What we as individuals bring to the organization – in the way of our values, experience, wisdom, perceptions, assumption, beliefs, and attitudes – interacts with and affects the direction and future capacity of the organization.

Activating the soul of any company begins with working with the members of the organization and enabling them to be their very best selves. It seems like a very good place to

Developing skills for awareness and understanding of multiple perspectives leads to finding the best solutions for everyone.

 activating empathy



Reach out today for more information on our Activating Empathy program!

5 Practices for Digital Cleaning



With the new year comes a desire to start fresh across the board, creating new routines for health and wellness. However, with increases in remote work and new technology apps and devices, we don't realize the impact that digital clutter has on our lives. Apps, junk mail, subscriptions, and old files take up space in your mind and on your devices. Taking even 5 minutes to clean up digital clutter can make a big difference in your mental clarity and ability to focus. Here are a few practices to complete a digital cleaning.

1 Take advantage of 'waiting time.'

We all have opportunities to wait. It can be at the doctor's office, during a subway commute, waiting in line, etc. While waiting, try cleaning out your phone or tablet. Scroll through photos and delete duplicates or screenshots you no longer need. Then work on cleaning up other areas such as notes, emails, contacts, apps, text messages, bookmarks, voicemails, etc. Or use that time to go into applications you frequently use and disable notifications.

2 Update computer performance.

If you are like me, you use your computer quite frequently. But how often are we taking care of our devices? Schedule time to improve your computer's performance by running the operating system and application updates, deleting old downloads, removing unwanted programs, and removing startup items that don't serve you. Then make a recurring task or calendar appointment to do this clean up every 6 months. Your system will thank you for increased performance and memory!

3 Cancel subscriptions.

Remember subscribing for daily cat facts? Me either. It's time to remove some subscriptions that you aren't engaging with. Finding with accounts you still have active subscriptions on an iPhone is easy - go to the AppStore, tap Apple ID, then View Apple ID, then Subscriptions. On google, tap the Menu button, then account, then Subscriptions. Or scroll to the bottom of the daily cat fact email and look for the unsubscribe button.

Stephenie Rockwell,
Director of Culture + Client Experience



4 Empty your trash.

You selected and deleted all the old photos on your phone, deleted junk mail, and added temp files and old downloads to your trash bin on the computer, but you need to empty the trash. And if you use Microsoft Outlook for email, make sure to click on Folders and delete those Sync issues. Those emails can add up quickly!

5 Identify timewasters and improve digital well-being.

My final tip is to identify how you digitally waste time. On your iPhone, go to Settings > Screen time. For Android phones go to Settings > Digital Wellbeing > Dashboard > check the time under Screen time. Look at your daily activities and how much time you spend on each application. Does this time bring you joy? If not, set boundaries and limits. Utilize focus mode on devices. Fine-tune these tech habits to help achieve your personal digital well-being.

After you have completed these steps, you can enjoy the benefits of your rejuvenated system and enjoy fewer digital distractions – at least until next year.

We recommend creating recurring tasks or calendar appointments to revisit these steps annually.

A close-up photograph of two hands clasped together in a supportive grip. The hand on the right is wearing a green and black camouflage sleeve. The background is a soft, out-of-focus natural setting.

Practice Makes ~~Perfect~~ Patient

A Special Edition Blog in Support of Veterans in the Workplace

Craig Andrews, US. Army, Retired, Facilitator

As I prepared for military retirement, I did what every serviceman and servicewoman did: attend transitional seminars to help make me compatible with the civilian lifestyle. They focused on resume writing, job hunting, and handling the stress of life after the military, sort of. What they didn't teach me was how to handle and cope with some of the minor nuances of the civilian workplace and how they were completely different from my career in uniform. While we could no doubt talk about the vast differences between military versus civilian work ethic and culture, there is one I want to discuss today; the importance of patience and how it affects us as a professional as well as our overall health.

Patience is one of those skills; yes, it is a skill you can learn and master; some of us have it in abundance while others, like me, struggle with daily. Over time, this struggle can cause health implications far worse to manage than the issue you were initially impatient with. Some of you may have a limiting belief that "It takes too long to get things done," or "Decisions take too long. Decide and go!"

If you resonate with those above clichés, you aren't alone. Many of us believe it simply because that is how we were *wired* due to our long military careers. In the military, we were given an order, and we were expected to execute that order almost instantaneously without much thought or effort behind it. As leaders in the military, we were given a problem, and others looked to us to make those quick decisions and issue those orders. This style of task after task completion suited us in the military because our jobs, whether in an office setting or on a field training exercise, were geared towards prepping us to make those types of tough decisions when we faced combat.

As a civilian, it isn't like that. Businesses aren't preparing daily for fighting the horrors of the world. We aren't trying to get things done as fast as we can. We are allowed to take time to evaluate the costs involved prior to and through execution. We can think about how the participants might feel about this new project or new policy. We didn't always have time for that in the military but in the civilian workplace, we sometimes have a hard time adapting to this drastic change of pace.

So, how do we get to a sense of calm and start managing our expectations of others to establish more patience?

No One Makes You Impatient Except YOU!

- The wait for a return email isn't causing impatience. The boss not listening to your ideas isn't either. You are allowing those things to make you feel impatient and cause you stress and anger.
- We control our own emotions. We lose our patience. Sure, there are all kinds of frustrating moments and people we encounter in our lives, but how we respond has always been, and will always be, up to us as individuals.

Be Mindful of the Things Making You Impatient

- Many of us have too many thoughts racing through our heads and we cannot keep track of all of them at once. At InteraWorks, we coach a method called the Mind Sweep and focus on accepting the fact that we will never get it all done.
- Accept that you will never get it all done, and that's OK! Start by writing down everything you need to do, and then work on the tasks by priority. Doing so lessens stress and anxiety and helps you become less impatient about waiting around for things you have no control over.

Stop Doing Things That Are Not Important

- We all have things in our lives that take time away from what is important. One way of removing stress from our lives is to stop doing those things.
- Look at your schedule from when you wake up to the time you go to sleep. Take out two or three things that you do that aren't important but take time. It is time to learn to say no to things that cause stress and make us impatient.

Relax and Take Deep Breaths

- You hear it all the time, RELAX!!
- One of the easiest ways to ease impatient feelings is to take slow deep breaths to help calm the mind and body. If this does not help, I personally find walking away from the problem and thinking of my last favorite vacation spot very helpful in getting refocused on what matters most.

Make Yourself Wait

- The best way to practice patience is to make yourself wait. Studies show that waiting for things makes us happier in the long run.
- Start with something small like waiting a few extra minutes to get that morning cup of joe and then move on to something bigger. You will start to see a change in stress levels and then gain more patience as you practice.

You aren't going to learn patience overnight, but you can practice how to manage your stress and become more patient over time.

The first step is owning up to the self-awareness that you are causing your own stress in this matter and that you alone need to address it. Taking the necessary actions now, rather than later, will help you realize that you are able to manage your levels of impatience and then begin to truly experience and appreciate that you have served Our Country with respect and admiration, but that part of our life is over and it's time to start a new journey full of wonder and excitement.

From all of us at
InteraWorks,
Please accept our
heartfelt wish that
wherever your
journey takes you,
you know that
we are grateful
for you and
for that service.

Lifelong Learning

The Door is Always Open

Stacy Cross, Programs + Branding Lead

As the nature of work continues to evolve career paths are becoming more dynamic and less predictable. Lifelong learning is now essential for individuals and organizations to stay competitive. At InteraWorks, we believe in lifelong learning and find immense joy in sharing this passion with our team members and with our learners.

What is lifelong learning?

At a practical level, lifelong learning is the act of continuous learning throughout one's entire life, especially outside of or after completing formal schooling. Lifelong learning is not only an action but also a state of mind. Because of this, it differs from continuing education, which is simply formalized learning that builds upon knowledge in a certain field or subject. Lifelong learning is a voluntary and self-motivated pursuit of knowledge – which never stops. It may encompass both the personal and professional areas in your life – often concurrently.

Here are some of the types of lifelong learning initiatives:

Developing a new skill

(e.g. cooking, programming, public speaking)

Self-taught study

(e.g. learning a new language, researching a topic of interest, subscribing to a podcast)

Learning a new sport or activity

(e.g. learning to ski, learning to exercise, enrolling in a yoga program)

Learning to use a new technology

(e.g. smart devices, new software applications)

Acquiring new knowledge

(e.g. taking a self-interest course via online education or classroom-based course)

Lifelong learning for Organizational Leadership

Lifelong learning is certainly important for an individual's employability; however, it is also critical for personal growth and professional development and is a key component of successful leadership in the corporate world.

“Intellectual capital will always trump financial capital.”

– Self-made billionaire, Paul Tudor Jones

Many people, influenced by traditional collegiate learning, tend to view education as an upfront investment with passive benefits for years to come. The outlook of a lifelong learner presents a contracting perspective in which education should be a continual process that never truly ends.

It should be no surprise that the most effective leaders today are open to learning in non-traditional ways. Highly effective leaders are coachable – willing and able to “unlearn” concepts that are no longer working and “relearn” things that will help them to be better managers, trainers, strategists, and motivators. Instead of saying “I know”, they instead say, “I want to know” and are open to innovative ideas that would have never gained traction otherwise.

The importance of lifelong learning

Here are a few key reasons a lifelong learning mindset has a positive impact on the lives and careers of both current and future leaders:



Opens the Mind

Allows for a free exchange of ideas and viewpoints among learners bringing us to a new level of enlightenment.



Increased Wisdom

Enables us to put our lives in perspective and increases our understanding of ourselves and previous successes and failures.



Adaptability to Change

Supports us in keeping up with society's changes and adapting to the changing job market more easily than those who place limits on their learning potential.



Greater Empathy

Forge strong relationships with their team members, understand and acknowledge different perspectives, and motivate employees to give their best. Since lifelong learning often involves deliberately seeking out ideas that are different from our own, it allows for the development of empathy and emotional intelligence.



Improved Happiness

Pursue passions and interests outside of work by motivating leaders to focus some of their time and energy on hobbies and other activities – increasing contentment in both their personal and professional lives.

Next Step: A Personal Leadership Development Plan

The ideas behind lifelong learning and personal leadership development align well with one another and it is often impossible to pursue one without the other.

Taking a moment to reflect on your goals and gaps will drive your leadership development plan development with focus and clarity. The more you understand what you want to get out of your lifelong learning practice, the more likely you are to stick with it.

If you are looking for ways to grow personally and professionally, here are some elements that you should consider including in your personal plan:

What major gaps have stalled my performance as a leader?

(e.g. With new challenges arising from remote working, it has become challenging to foster a positive atmosphere with my team.)

What is my personal leadership development goal for the next year?

(e.g. Over the next few months, I want to focus on developing my communication skills with my team)

Why do I want to expand/strengthen my level of knowledge?

What are my ultimate career goals?

(both short-term and long-term)

A prosperous life requires continuous inquiry, creation, and discovery. There is always something to learn. Whether you're picking up a hobby or starting a new career, you'll need to acquire fresh knowledge and skills. And you should be eager to embrace the challenge.

“The doors of wisdom
are never shut.”

– Benjamin Franklin



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Scenario Planning

for an Uncertain Future

Anne McGhee Stinson

Director of Practice + Managing Partner

Modern organizations are designed to keep destabilizing information and the idea of uncertainty at a distance. These last several years of pandemics, cultural and geopolitical upheaval and the continuing march of machine learning and automation have made it clear that this ideal is impossible and may not even be desirable. Today we are going to embrace unpredictability and uncertainty as a tool to help us create the future!

The practice of Scenario Planning provides opportunities to share alternative visions of the future and then teams can create strategies based on the scenarios that develop. Perhaps even more important, however, is the collaborative process of creating the scenarios. Researching and scanning the environment, divergent thinking, challenging assumptions, and discussions that go into the process can help teams sharpen their judgment and clarify why they think what they do, test assumptions, and broaden perspectives.

This is exactly what is needed in very large organizations right now. The ability to systematize the way we think about the future and therefore more actively influence the future. Scenario Planning is ultimately about:

- Long-term performance
- Building/maintaining competitive advantage
- The ability to plan strategically despite uncertainties
- Shifting from reacting to anticipating
- The ability to explore possible futures and then take steps to improve flexibility as future trends emerge.

Innovation and agility begin with the ability to see beyond current reality and our assumptions about the future. Scenario planning provides a replicable process that combines analytical assessment with wide-ranging imagination to explore new possibilities.



Today as never before, we need a multiplicity of visions, dreams, and prophecies– images of potential tomorrow.

Before we can rationally decide which alternative pathways to choose ... we must first ascertain which are possible. Conjecture, speculation, and the visionary view thus become as coldly practical a necessity as feet-on-the-floor “realism” was in an earlier time.

– Alvin Toffler, Futurist (1928-2016)



Reach out today for more information on our Scenario Planning program!

"The vast possibilities of our great future
will become realities only if we make
ourselves responsible for that future."

- Gifford Pinchot



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