

## HIGH CONNECTIVITY TEAMS

### TRANSFORMING THE NATURE OF HUMAN WORK GROUPS

#### **The notion of Plasma Teams**

*There is an interesting occurrence in nature of the behaviour of what are called free electrons in a piece of metal. Under normal conditions, these free electrons tend to move around randomly as autonomous, independent entities, doing their own thing as it were. However as soon as more energy is added to the metal, the situation begins to change and the apparent chaos evolves to a new organization, and the electrons suddenly begin oscillating as a self-organized whole, with what are called **plasma vibrations**. What is revealed through this simple phenomenon in nature is that the individuality of the electrons is enfolded within a larger wholeness, which reveals itself in the right conditions. This larger wholeness is like a meta-system of connectivity, which contains the individual “stories” of the electrons. Similarly, the meanings and gestures of a ballet dancer are contained in the whole body of the dancer. So while it is possible to analyse the motion of a dancer’s body by means of photographs, each element has its origin in the entire gesture. Patterns and events are expressions of an underlying unity of form rather than separate entities. In that sense these sub-atomic particles are not disconnected entities, although they appear to be that, but are part of a larger and interconnected whole. Their motion and existence is determined by a subtle force called *Quantum Potential*, which guides the motion of particles by providing active information about the whole environment. What is fascinating is that even particles that are dis-located from each other, are able to “communicate” with each other in ways that cannot be explained by the transfer of physical signals. These “non-local” connections are instantaneous.*

What is the equivalent of this plasma state for human teams? Is there an equivalent of the quantum potential, as a force that binds and sustains high-performance teams? What are the processes of deep connectivity that create team members to align with each other? These questions, and other similar ones, are becoming critically important in a time when the very nature and processes of organizing work are undergoing radical changes. Virtual teams are becoming common in most international organizations; belonging to more than two or three project teams is almost a norm for most companies. That has had an impact on motivation and loyalty, and the loss of the old factors that created and sustained loyalty in people towards teams and companies. From these perspectives, it is my intention to explore the processes that generate and sustain what I refer to as high-connectivity or plasma teams.

#### **“I Am Because You Are”: The Ecology of Belonging**

Teams that can generate a high level of connectivity between team members automatically perform better. Connectivity not only appears to be a pre-requisite to high performance; it may be the single most important factor for teams to perform consistently well. It may be appropriate to point out that I am using the term high-connectivity in a significantly different way from what is usually called “team-building”. Connectivity is more than just the emotional sense of being in a team; it is also an underlying collective intelligence that emerges from the team as a whole at a

deeply cognitive, emotive and behavioural level. When teams learn to enter into that space of connectivity, they perform at a peak level because the performance is no longer the sum of individual performance competencies; rather it emerges from this collective intelligence.

When teams, whether they be in sport or organizations talk about “feeling like one”, or of “becoming one” they are tacitly trying to express that deep level of connectivity which is then embodied through each of the team members. This is similar to the plasma phenomenon in science and nature where the teams discover a collective force that almost guides individual thought and action as if they were the synchronous movements of a dancer.

What then are would be the characteristics of such high-connectivity teams that perform highly? In interviews with a diverse group of team leaders and organizational managers about what they considered to be high-connectivity teams, alongside the more conventional factors of focus, optimal pressure, motivation, etc, the following commonalities began to emerge:

- Sense of flow of meaning, of everything making sense synchronously
- A deep sense of understanding one another
- Sense of an unfolding collective story
- Total clarity on what needs to be achieved
- Sense of playfulness and blurred lines between work and play
- High level of emotive energy
- Time as flow, of the future emerging out of the collective present
- Low need for leadership as an individualized process
- Ability to step up pace and slow down as required, as a collective, shared ability

What is clear from this list of qualities is that high-connectivity teams clearly operate outside of the dominant mechanistic paradigm that prevails in traditional organizations. This has also been called the Industrial Paradigm, which is largely made up of transactional working relationships. According to Rost, some of the characteristics of such an industrial paradigm are: (1) a structural-functionalist view of the organization, (2) a personalized focus on the leader, (3) a dominant objective of goal achievement, (4) a self-interested and individualist outlook, (5) a male model of life, (6) a utilitarian and materialistic ethical perspective, and (7) a rational, technocratic, linear, quantitative and scientific language and methodology. (Rost 1991) As is self-evident, many of the eight characteristics that Rost has ascribed to the industrial paradigm are already beginning to go out of place in today’s knowledge organizations. (Sydanmaanlakka 2000). Clearly, none of the characteristics mentioned by Rost would fit with the qualities of the high-connectivity teams described earlier.

Now, the industrial paradigm itself is based upon a deep-rooted worldview of a stable and mechanistic world that emerges out of Newtonian mechanics in particular and 19<sup>th</sup> century science in general. Sydanmaanlakka has described some of the characteristics of this “machine” dominated worldview aptly as follows. *Primary Needs*: Physiological; *Intelligence used*: Rational; *Communication Type*: Command; *Role of follower*: Passive; *Teamwork method*: Working individuals; *Leadership Style*: Command, control and correct. I have described the overriding metaphor of

fragmentation as being located in the three classical pillars of objectivism, positivism, and reductionism. (1997 Lessem and Palsule). This has had a pervasive hold on management and leadership theory to this day and we continue using this metaphor and the overriding worldview as the dominant model for understanding and managing organizations, teams and the dynamics of human interaction. Management and leadership theory continues to be dominated by the dynamics of fragmentation from the way organizations are structured, to the way strategies are created, all the way to how people are led. These dynamics have a deeply negative impact on the ability of teams to explore and tap into their connectivity.

So we continue to use vocabulary such as, teams being “put together”, as in separate items brought together, are bound by functional role relationships and leadership usually assumes a functional, individual-leading-group transaction.

The dynamics of fragmentation subjects human relationships to what I call the *I-It* mode of transaction in which the individual and his/her relationship to work is deeply fragmented by a series of interventions, both conscious and unconscious, and the relationships to other team members emerges out of this fragmented state as a functional transaction. This mental model has become an unconscious mental map with which we negotiate our daily engagement with our work and with team members. Needless to say, this model impedes the generation of real connectivity for high performance.

Unlike the *I-It* transaction of owning, the belonging mode is characterized by a *We-Of* relationship, which opens spaces for interconnectedness and interdependence. To belong is to take responsibility for the whole. Belonging automatically includes *belonging-to*, as well as *belonging-for* and *belonging-with*. Belonging is what Bateson (1976) called “the pattern that connects”. “*I am because you are*” is an old saying from the Ubuntu philosophy of Africa, and it resonates with this sense of belonging. To that extent, although we speak of “belonging to a team” in daily management speak, it is hardly in the spirit of *because-you-are*.

High-connectivity plasma teams operate fully in the belonging-mode. They are simultaneously engaged in the dynamics of *for*, *with*, and *to*, in the very nature of the way they work together. The *for* provides a deep and profound collective meaning and value, infusing the team with a dream, purpose and energy, as exemplified by the story of the janitor at NASA who referred to himself as part of a team that had put a man on the moon. The *with* gives the profoundly deep sense of interdependence and courage and the collective leadership that emerges from within the group. The *to* defines the team and the organization in a way that has nothing to do with the ordinary, functional definitions within which the organization is confined, but it seeks to relate to and engage with an ideal and vision, which is able to infuse the passion and insight needed to transform the organization.

The belonging mode opens the gateway to understanding everything in terms of patterns of interconnectedness. From this point of view, a department in a company is not a substantial entity in itself but part of a multiplicity of events interconnected with other events in a pattern. In the ecology of belonging, the functioning of an organization cannot exist in itself, a-part from its total environment and then relate to the environment. The functioning is itself a mode of interacting, of being influenced

and influencing. To belong to a team is to partake in the pattern that is the result of the connectivity, and be influenced and influence the pattern.

The dynamics of fragmentation sees relationships as being “external” to the individual. The assumption is that the individual entity, be it an employee, a department or the organization has primarily an independent existence, and then enters into relationships. So with this logic, *I am* precedes *I relate to* or *I belong to*, with the effect that an imaginary division is set up between two apparent modes of being and belonging, which are in reality one and the same. This generates a huge incoherence that undermines connectivity in work groups and teams. But the process of belonging to a team is inclusive of who I am as a person. Rather than being linked by role relationships, job titles and functional transactions, human beings are able to develop patterns of connectivity that draw upon the depth and richness of the totality of the person and developing a collective intelligence in the team.

### **Leading from within**

Traditional approaches to building and leading a team in many companies continues to be not very different from say, building a bridge. Take separate parts, use a rational design in assigning structure, fit in the various parts, connect the parts, and you have the final product. But clearly this approach does not work, as the laws of human interaction are significantly different from laws of mechanics. In the dominance of the industrial paradigm and the dynamics of fragmentation that we have assumed to be the only way of managing our teams and organizations, we have completely ignored the fact that as human beings our lineage is not mechanical, but one that comes from life and that we are an indelible part of nature.

Nature does not work with fragmentations but with connectivity. Where does a leaf end? From a natural perspective, the boundaries of an object such as the leaf are in fact its beginnings, as it becomes part of a vast, interconnected whole in which energy flows from one form to another. The leaf is in a continual and ongoing relationship with the sun. What makes an animal grow more fur when it is going to be a colder winter? From our mechanistic perspective we would ask, from where does it “acquire” that future knowledge? But that question is based upon our assumption that knowledge exists as a commodity and that it has to be acquired from external sources. In reality, the animal participates in the knowing process because that knowledge is located all through the system in which the animal is inextricably embedded. So the soil, the trees, the clouds, and the animal are all part of a collective intelligence in which the knowledge is accessible. Like a holograph, the totality of the system can be found in any single part, paraphrasing Blake’s description of finding “heaven in a grain of sand”. Buddhism goes even further and describe that things are empty in the sense that they lack in a self-essence (svabhava) by virtue of which things would have an independent existence. What we call parts then are actually *sub-totalities* that carry the whole in themselves. In terms of virtual teams, each individual team member becomes a sub-totality who is the team individualized in his or her form.

Who leads in nature? The strongest, the fittest, the most resilient? On the contrary, leadership unfolds out of the state of internal coherence in the ongoing connectivity between one part of the system and the other, ensuring that the system is a dynamically self-regulating one that is capable of sustaining itself. The bacteria that

cannot be seen by our naked eyes probably do more to sustain life on the earth than the biggest and strongest creatures. The science of ecology is opening access to knowledge that we have ignored for the past three hundred odd years of the dominant paradigm of fragmentation. We are beginning to understand what high-connectivity, interconnection and interdependence mean and how it could be possible to apply these insights into practice. We are beginning to see the effects of what happens when we do not treat the earth as an interconnected whole. In the profound connection between say, weather phenomena in Northern Europe and deforestation in Malaysia, we are beginning to slowly understand the hitherto invisible world of non-local connectedness. The different “parts” of the global eco-systemic team stay connected and dependent upon each other, led by a shared intelligence that is at once local and global. Leadership happens from within rather than through an individual leading the group!

### **Internal Coherence as the suspension of prescribed order**

But what human teams and work groups? In what circumstances does this deep belonging and connection take place? In interviews with managers and team leaders from all over the world, every time I have asked them to describe where and in what circumstances have seen teams of people “connect” at a level of belonging and internal coherence, they have invariably described some situation of emergency or crisis. Whether it is a team in a water company battling a crisis of a burst water main on an icy Christmas Eve, or of an insurance team that creates a solution to a medical crisis on the day of a national utility strike, the similarities are amazing. People have also spoken about how an experience that causes a deep shift, such as the death of a colleague, suddenly develops a deep connectivity in the team. What emerge as common characteristics in the course of the experience of connectivity can be described as follows:

- *The lack of any one leader to whom the group looks to for instruction and delegation*
- *A powerful sense of a “deeper level of connectedness” with one another*
- *A highly developed sense of learning as a group*
- *A great sense of kinship, solidarity and even a sense of affection for one another*
- *A complete lack of distraction from the task at hand*
- *An uncanny ability to collectively know what is needed*
- *Instantaneous communication, often without the need to verbalize*
- *A deep sense of the team as being interlinked within and linked to a bigger story without*

Most people I spoke to, referred to these situations as being devoid of the usual clutter of day-to-day reflexive and closed-loop thinking, and of habitual patterns of working together. It is clear that in moments of emergency, the formal and prescriptive planning process is overridden by a self-organizing process that emerges out of the richness of the present moment and the ability of the people to engage and connect at a deep level of consciousness.

There is virtually no agenda fixed in time except for a shared sense of the final desired outcome, and most importantly, there is the singular absence of the one, individual leader. The team unconsciously discovers a deeper order of collectively working together from focusing solely on individual competence to the collective intelligence that is accessible to all team members. This state is not dissimilar to what was earlier described as Quantum Potential or the existence of knowledge as a shared quality in nature.

This is not to indicate that human teams work best in emergencies. What is critical for a deeper understanding of how people work and learn together, is that in such situations what really happens is that habitual ways of interaction in the reflexive, fragmented mode, collapse. Like the electrons in a plasma state, individuals suddenly discover a deeper totality of which they are a part, and generate the capacity to communicate and work together using tools that come from a deeper level of consciousness that includes emotional and non-verbal centers of intelligence, in addition to rational intelligence. This is when the team discovers the processes of internal coherence, the state of consciousness in which interconnectedness and interdependence precede everything else.

Emergencies and events such as the death of a colleague also tend to provide a perspective on life and its fullness, which is in stark contrast to the sterile and prescribed order that is often created in work places. They help to release the full emotive energy of human teams that then leads to the discovery of connectivity.

### **Discovering High-Connectivity**

The question then is how teams, virtual or otherwise can generate this high-energy that comes from internal coherence? Of course the issue is more important for virtual teams. In the absence of direct, day-to-day contact where many anomalies can get fixed, the need for internal coherence is magnified many times over.

What are the interactive and connective processes that human beings need to engage with when they work in dislocated space-times? These are questions that are becoming critically important for scores of organizations around the world. Virtual teams are fast becoming the norm for most organizations and are ushering in a totally new phenomenon, but most organizations and managers are continuing to rely on the old ways of managing and leading them, which are simply not working. A new theory of leading virtual teams is not only necessary, it is simply impossible to function without it, as so many organizations are beginning to discover.

In reality what this new phenomenon is surfacing is the very inadequacy of our old ways of understanding how people-groups learn and work together, and of what constitutes a model of leadership that is not based on traditional, fragmented notions of the individual leader. In terms of evolution, managing work teams in a non-local space is as far as we have come from the stages of hunting together, herding, and the machine age of industrial teams. The phenomenon of virtuality is a classic example of something that simply cannot be addressed by the tools of the old paradigm that is essentially based on localized entities and work units.

The key differences between local and non-local work units are as follows:

	<b>Local Teams</b>	<b>Non-Local Teams</b>
Structure	<i>Tightly bound</i>	<i>Fuzzy, amorphous</i>
Location	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Disparate</i>
Workspace	<i>Confined</i>	<i>Undefined</i>
Worktime	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Diverse zones</i>
Supervision	<i>Open to control</i>	<i>Little or no control</i>
Routine follow-up	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Sporadic, intermittent or none</i>
Interaction	<i>Face-to-face</i>	<i>Technology</i>

Clearly, the traditional rules of management and leadership do not apply in the same way when it comes to a virtual team. At the level of local interaction between human beings in organizations, work groups operate within functional roles dictated by such traditional parameters as, job descriptions, competencies, reporting lines, seniority, etc. This is the dominant mode of interaction in a traditional, industrial paradigm work unit. The familiarity of being in proximity with members of a work-group ensures that the level of work interaction is largely governed by habituated and reflexive patterns of conversation and work habits. This is typically, what I refer to as the “low-energy mode” of interaction in which memos, files, emails, meetings, decisions, strategies, business plans, work plans, team structures, hierarchies, protocol, take over any other possibility of a deeper level of human interaction and leaning at the workplace.

Conversations and team interactions are maintained at this low-energy level of interactive consciousness relying more on pre-formulated rules of agreement and prescriptive behaviour patterns. This makes for better control and uniformity on the part of management and is clearly rooted in the industrial paradigm that is governed by external relationality. As a propeller in a turbine is related to the motor, or as a gear in a watch is related to the hands of the clock, external relationality is based on the notion that things (and humans) exist prior to our relationships. This reflexive, low-energy mode of interaction is limited to what needs to be done and how it is to be done, which is the prescribed order of the organization. It only allows interaction and engagement as long as it is within a prescribed, closed system which automatically makes it closed to any self-organization. One of the key fallouts of this closed ness is that it precludes complex learning from taking place. As a result, teams and organizations do not have the capacity or the ability to be innovative.

Within this prescribed order, the rules of engagement between local team members are adequately defined by such things as: job titles, job descriptions, functional roles, strategy, company vision, company goals, etc which become the key factors that create the interactive glue for the team that mainly emerges from functional and mechanical factors and symbols.

When it comes to interaction in non-local modes, this reflexive, low-energy mode is rendered inadequate and almost obsolete. The familiar rules of engagement of the reflexive mode all but disappear. Traditional symbolisms of leadership, agreed symbols of status such as cars and office-sizes, and the familiarity of habitual, reflexive conversations, the meeting schedules, and most importantly the encounters with team members in and around work areas are all replaced by a new unfamiliar work organization. Traditional solutions of technology and leadership seek to

replicate the reflexive mode in non-local interaction but it does not work on its own because the very attributes of the reflexive mode are absent in the non-local environment. The factors of prescribed order are not adequate enough in an environment where team members may have different external allegiances and may even come from different organizations.

In the absence of prescribed order, it becomes all the more imperative for members of the non-local workgroup to be linked in a significantly different way. As we have seen, the traditional industrial paradigm is incapable of providing the concept or even the epistemology for this alternative linkage. The revolutionary nature of the virtual team world is that it has no precedence in human and organizational memory and is a radically different kind of human organization. What is being challenged therefore is not just the old tools and processes for organizing teams; more importantly, what is being questioned here is the dominant model of leadership a transactional phenomenon in which a leader who is given the role of leadership uses the reflexive and prescribed order to ensure that the team performs.

Virtual teams automatically challenge the assumption of the leader-leads-the-team model as it is no longer possible for that one leader to use the old qualities that came from the old paradigm of status, job-title, or even the more symbolic qualities of larger offices, bigger cars, etc. The familiar handles of what ascribed leadership status have all but evaporated in the virtual world.

What is that glue, that common source which will enable non-local team members to be “connected”? Physicists have been studying a curious phenomenon in which two particles that are fired from a single source in different directions continue to be in instantaneous contact with each other although spatially separated. As they are both linked to a common source of energy, they continue to be “connected” and interdependent, although separated.

In non-local teams, what is the ground of connectivity that is the equivalent of the common source of energy in particle physics? This applies equally well to local teams. After having worked with scores of human work teams, both local and non-local, my understanding is that teams discover high-connectivity when they create not just the glue that binds them, but implement the processes that continually question the prescribed order of habituated, reflexive responses to one another. The glue is the crafted, collective story of the team, which is both inclusive of the stories of the individual and that of the organization, and a story that is continually evolving towards a shared, commonly held sense of the future. I am using the word “sense” here deliberately, instead of the more commonly used word, “vision”. While it is important to have vision, it can so easily be turned into becoming yet another aspect of the prescribed order and it loses its potency and energy. What I mean by *sense* is a pre-verbal state at a deeper level of consciousness which the individuals learn to sustain, and use to communicate with one another. This happens when the team collectively learn to replace the pattern of being held within the prescribed order with a new pattern, which is based on engaging in transformative conversations. I have found the following as elements that are critical to establish both, the glue and the process:

- *Profound clarity of objectives and goals and the ability to retain the clarity outside of the prescribed order*
- *Deep awareness of oneself and of reflexive patterns in one's thinking*
- *Learning to use emotive energy in interaction*
- *Awareness of the stories of the others in the team*
- *Sense of the unfolding story of the team and the organization*
- *Ability to trans-verse: using conversation to break through the prescribed order*
- *Sense of emergent time: it is the present out of which the future emerges*

A team I recently worked with over many days, in a well-known company was able to create such a breakthrough simply because they were able to discover their ground of belonging. Prior to this, there was no energy, and the performance was out-of-sync with the expectations. In a sense, this team was a reflection of so many work groups in companies all over the world. They said they were a team, but they belonged to nothing. They said communication strategies were in place but their conversations were reflexive and close-looped. They said they were a well-bonded team but they were just a polite team who spent all their time within the confines of the prescribed order. Putting aside business plans, and slowly emptying the agenda of anything prescribed, the group learned to explore the spaces outside of conditioned responses and thinking patterns. Rich and real stories began to emerge, signs and hints of life outside the prescribed order. There was a gradual up swell of emotive energy and the talk slowly became a conversation. Time began to acquire a new meaning and slowly but surely, time as the present began to overcome the trappings of the past and the future. Over the next two days, the team began to form out of the collective team story that was unfolding through them. Conversation shifted to *trans-versation*, the ability to connect at deeper levels of consciousness. Finally out of all this emerged the tangible components of strategy, roles, accountabilities, milestone measurements, performance targets, etc. What also emerged was a razor-sharp focus, of a future, which had already been born, but was waiting to be realized. Eventually this led to a complete overhaul of the way they worked together and to their relationship with their line manager, including re-positioning their outputs vis-à-vis the rest of the company. In three months, their performance levels went up by an extraordinary level.

I have had similar experiences working with non-local teams who having created the ground of connectivity, are able to stay connected like the quantum particles that are non-spatially linked to each other. In fact what I surprisingly find is that non-local teams seem to retain the high-connectivity better than local teams, and I would put it down to not being bogged down by the prescriptive order of the organization, or even by water-cooler gossip!

### **Leadership Communities**

The notions of belonging, high-connectivity and collective intelligence challenge the industrial and mechanistic perspective of intelligence as a entity that is “possessed” by individuals. So conditioned are we by our educational methods and the rewarding of

individual knowledge well into our work lives, that we have naturally taken this as the only form of reality. In our traditional education system, we reward individual intelligence. At work we are expected to work in teams but we have no training in how to so and our relationships are merely transactional. Whether it is the meetings we have, the emails and memos we send, or even the agreements we make and the decisions we take, they all seem to emerge from this low-energy, transactional set of relationships. This is indeed the prescribed order in so many organizations and because it is so pervasive, we have assumed that it is the only way of doing things.

What I have suggested in this paper is that there is a deeper level of connectivity that can be generated by groups of people. It is more like a flow emerging from the collective consciousness of the team, which then shapes the interactions of the members in their conversations, their depth of engagement, and eventually their work and their performance and results. Naturally, in such a scenario, leadership emerges from out of the collective ground and becomes “embodied” in its team members. The need for an individual leader, save perhaps for a token representational value, is replaced by a state of a leadership community which manifests itself through its members but exists at the deep level of the connectivity.

Virtual, or non-local teams give us the opportunity to challenge and go beyond the old industrial paradigm and provides us with the opportunity to develop new ways of leading, working and learning that are more in tune with the knowledge age we are in today than what we have been using. And in the process, the real spin-off will be for the non-virtual, local world; after all the leadership model that the management world has assumed to be the only one is also under question as the work of people like Senge, Jaworski, Sydanmaanlakka has been demonstrating. The real value of the virtual world is that in rendering the traditional localized model obsolete, it opens up the space for new thinking and practice in all areas of leadership and group working.

To summarize, these are the characteristics I have observed of the reflexive, low-energy level:

- Each team member preserves his or her individual history and interacts at a low energy level of interaction.
- The unit of performance is always the individual. There is a very low sense of interdependence as in being part of a whole.
- Indicators of performance are based on individual fulfilment of specific job requirements.
- Work is defined by functional tasks, and logical consistency is favored over uncertainty.
- Traditional values operate of “owning” as in “my area of work”.
- Relationships with team members are functional as there is a low engagement with others as well as a low self-awareness of oneself
- Communication is content rich but context poor:
- Momentum is dictated by required output: the sense of time is very much one that is dominated by the need to deliver in the future
- Need for a team leader: Although couched in different words, the fact is that there is a critical need for a team leader who maintains external coherence between team members through control and co-ordination. In that sense, especially a virtual team spends much of its energies and time in transcribing

the norms and logic of managing a local team into a virtual reality. Most of email and other technological interventions are designed to give the virtual team members the feel of being a local team. The team leader, although significantly different from the leader of a localized team, is still locked into the same traditional processes.

In contrast, these are the characteristics that I have observed when there is internal coherence. They come very close to what was described right the beginning as the characteristics of what would be a high-connectivity team.

- Each team member has the capacity of suspending conditioned responses and subsuming personal history at will into a shared story that is scripted collectively by the team
- There is a highly heightened sense of interdependence and mutuality
- Rather than the ownership mode, the belonging mode operates. This operates out of a collective, shared intelligence that emerges from within the team.
- Individual identity is no longer derived from “my area of work” or “my job”, it emerges from “I am because I belong to”.
- The level of relationships with team members is deep and comprehensive since the self is at the centre of all engagement processes. The team is perceived as emerging from the same source from where the self emerges
- Communication is content as well as context rich: know-why and know-how work together
- Momentum is dictated by an inspired sense of co-creating the future; the sense of time is both linear and emergent and there is a keen sense that the future exists in the collectively emergent present.
- High-connectivity with other team members is perceived as an imperative of the present without which future results cannot be created
- Leadership is a product of the collective intelligence of the team and emerges from the team rather than used from the outside. Internal coherence provides the ground and the self-organizing dynamics for collective leadership

### **Conclusion: Knowing as embodying, the secret of connectivity**

In the scientific and mechanical model that we have been using for three centuries, we assume that “knowing” is solely a rational process. To know something is literally then to almost point to the head as it is assumed that the brain is the locus of all knowing. As a result, in the industrial world, we have unknowingly shut out all other avenues of knowing in the assumption that the cerebral way is taken to be the only legitimate way. How many countless meetings can we think of where, cerebrally we have all come to an agreement, but we can sense if we are aware, that it is disembodied understanding! The agreements and decisions and the very process of knowing have come from a place where the real self of the individuals in the meetings has abstained! But we consider such a way of decision making to be perfectly legitimate because our logic has been constructed around disembodied knowing. Teams engage in the process of knowing at the very superficial cognitive level where the main emphasis is either on sub-consciously keeping away new insights, or on transforming any new input into old categories of the prescribed order.

Connectivity, especially in non-local teams must emerge from a deeper level of consciousness which becomes the ground that links one team member to another irrespective of physical distance. The golfer whose knowledge of the perfect swing is not located only in the technical knowledge of the shot but that is spread in the flowing movement of the golfer's mental processes, the aware body and the state of mind, is in the state of embodied knowing. At that level the golfer is tapping into a quantum potential of knowing which is simultaneously within her and outside of her. In a sense, the division itself between inside and outside becomes meaningless and it is better to talk of an undifferentiated flow. In the case of virtual teams, when team members enter that zone of embodied knowing, the content and context of their communication emerges at a high level of engagement and energy. When team members enter that zone of knowing, they discover the ground that connects them! Thus the non-local connectedness between the members of a virtual team is not enabled by the technology but by the deeper ground of shared collective intelligence.

Human beings need to learn to engage at such deeper levels of consciousness if they are to perform in what I have referred to as the plasma state. It is thus mandatory for work teams to start with processes that enable the discovery of the common source of energy. Once that is done, it needs sustained learning to begin the journey of moving from the reflexive, low energy level to one where the quantum potential is generated. The team then needs to come together at regular intervals to keep the learning process of keeping the high-connectivity. This shift to the embodying stage, releases the quantum potential that facilitates the rich, non-local connectedness between geographically separate team members of a work group.

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