

Together Growing

Leadership Influence and the Formation of Organizations

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Executive Summary

The Relational Style of leaders influences the nature of the organizations they lead. Any attempt to change the culture of an organization, without addressing the Relational Styles of leaders will fail. The organization will conform to the Relational Style of the leader as individuals adapt to the transactional requirements established by the leader.

We recommend that a Relational Style analysis of leaders precede an investment in changing the culture of an organization. Once one determines the Relational Style of the leader, one may explore how this style influences the culture of the organization. Understanding the genesis of organizational culture in the Relational Style of the leader is a necessary step in any change process.

Receive the commitment of the leader to change before attempting to change the organization he or she leads.

Tyrants, Hermits, and Responsive Leaders

In *The Root Values: Releasing the Power of Community* we introduced the PACT-L Model that explores the mystery of relationships. We identify four Relational Styles and demonstrate how higher relational competence enhances productive and mutually supportive interactions with others.

If you can address conflict creatively, enlist others in shared ownership of challenges, identify, diagnose, and overcome the cause of relational friction, you release the power of community.

Your Relational Style simply expresses the consistent pattern of your life. Certain habits have shaped your behavior over a lifetime. The PACT-L Model raises

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awareness of your unique Root Value system. How you prioritize Root Values informs your most comfortable style in relationship.

Two simple assumptions inform the model.

1. You are what you do.
2. You choose what you do.

Furthermore, a Root Value names your persistent preference with reference to three fundamental questions of existence.

1. Freedom: Do you prefer to broaden your freedom or limit it?
2. Anxiety: Do you prefer to engage danger, or understand it?
3. Time: Do you prefer to learn from the past and engage the present more intentionally, or do you prefer to remain unaware of the past and engage the present more habitually?

You answer these basic questions every day through your behavior. You act them out in your interactions with others. Your answer to these questions are how others experience you – your Relational Style.

(For more on Root Values and the PACT-L Model see “The Root Values and the PACT-L Model of Relationships”, available at www.together-growing.com/resources/leadership-and-community/white-papers/)

Three organizational types -- Hierarchical, Organic, and Collaborative – are outcomes of these influences.

The PACT-L Model helps us understand how four unique Relational Styles influence the development of organizations. Three organizational types -- Hierarchical, Organic, and Collaborative – are outcomes of these influences.

A hierarchical organization is the product of a Tyrant -- a leader limited to the Directing and Inspiring styles of relationship. An organic organization is the product of a Hermit – a leader limited to the Influencing and Exploring styles.

Consistent organizational patterns of relating emerge as people conform their behavior to that of the primary leader. Leaders influence the norms of organization as others adapt to their relational style. The three organizational types: Hierarchical,

Organic, or Collaborative – emerge as people persist in the pattern established by their primary leaders.

Both the Tyrant and the Hermit project an imagined future without being open to alternative perspectives. They are less intentional in their behavior. They are controlled by habits of perceptions, feelings, attitudes, and patterns of thought.

By contrast a Responsive Leader has developed competence in each of the Relational Styles. If you are a Responsive Leader you recognize your own habitual reactivity. You readily identify it as a conditioned response learned in the past and pulling you forward into the present. However, rather than follow through with that initial impulse, you pause and think: Is this the appropriate response to the current situation or merely my most familiar and therefore comfortable response?

As a Responsive Leader you demonstrate relational agility. You are less controlled by habits having learned to respond to situations with greater intentionality, greater mindfulness. You pay attention to relational dynamics. You are skilled in a broad range of behavioral options. You engage others with the relational style best suited to the circumstance.

The Tyrant and The Hermit lack this agility. Trapped in the habits of their lives, their priority is personal comfort. They fall back on familiar patterns. They rely on the deep groove, the well worn path, the easy road. It feels natural. Unfortunately, what feels natural from the personal perspective often increases relational friction and therefore complicates conflict when viewed from the perspective of others.

People in relationship with Tyrants or Hermits adapt to the quality of invitation that is offered. If a Tyrant demands obedience rather than initiative, she will get it. If a Hermit rewards compliance while dismissing honesty, he will get that. Over time this adaptation hardens into culture. New people pick up the cultural norm as they interact with old hands. They adapt to the behavior of the group without needing direct interaction with the primary leader. The culture transmits the organizational norms to others.

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The Genesis of Organizations

	Hierarchical	Organic	Collaborative
Founding	Conquest	Evolution	Informed Choice
Leadership	Authoritarian	Oligarchic	Distributed
Power	Domination	Influence	Shared
Structure	Pyramid	Concentric	Scale-Free Network
Norm	Obedience	Compliance	Trust

The Tyrant and Hierarchies

Tyrants are anchored in the Northern Hemisphere on the PACT-L model showing a pronounced preference for the Root Value Autonomy over Truth. They prefer closing on specific action arrived at independently to exploring alternative possibilities offered by others in the community.

Tyrants establish order through relational conquest of one form or another. Even polite bureaucratic processes express a tyrannical quality when a challenge is followed by retribution or punishment. Tyrants seeks to overwhelm others by the power of their personal will.

High-social affect Tyrants can feel warm and even affirming, provided one remains loyal. They tend to prefer an Inspiring Relational Style with the Directing Style secondary. Low-social affect Tyrants feel cold. They present with Directing as their primary style and Inspiring as their secondary style. Consistent with both the Directing and Inspiring styles is the priority of Autonomy in their Root Value system.

Valuing Autonomy as they do Tyrants have no qualms about pushing their initiatives despite the objections of others. Directing /Controllers may be more ruthless than Inspiring/Rescuers. The Root Value People partners with Autonomy in the Inspiring/Rescuer. This moderates the excessive zeal seen when the value of Autonomy partners with Commitment in the Directing/Controller.

Tyrants establish hierarchies. Their style is authoritarian and power tends to be concentrated in the single leader. The Tyrant's goal is control. The Tyrant's priority is personal success. The role of the Tyrant is Dictator who defines goals, objectives, and metrics, and metes out resources and rewards.

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The Tyrants source of power is the self. In conflict the Tyrant is aggressive and demanding. The Tyrant seeks service and obedience from others. Communication is direct and unilateral, coming down from above.

The hierarchical structure preferred by Tyrants assures power flows down from the top through very clear lines of accountability. One must know who to blame.

Organizational structure maintains a well-ordered unity. The Tyrant maintains order through an over-powering will. Dissent is not tolerated. This style replicates throughout the organization as the Tyrant elevates petty-tyrants to positions of formal authority. The Tyrant allows them to remain in place as long as they understand their limits.

The Tyrant is “the leader.” All others are “followers.” Hierarchical organizations demonstrate efficiency and stability at the expense of creativity and adaptability. The valued norm is explicit obedience to authority. “To learn to lead, you must first learn to obey.”

The Hermit and Organic Organizations

Hermit's function in the reflective mode and tend to allow order to emerge in their organizations. They have a more hands-off approach. They value Truth and have a contemplative frame of mind. In conflict they tend to turn inward, vacating the field of action to others.

Hermit's are anchored in the Southern hemisphere on the PACT-L model. Like the Tyrant, they are limited to one or two Relational Styles. Low-social affect Hermit tend toward isolation and prefer a close group of confidants. For this reason the source of power is influence rather than domination. Power is a matter of proximity. These leaders prefer an Influencing Relational Style with Exploring as their secondary style. High-social affect Hermit's project personal charisma and *joie de vivre*. They prefer an Exploring Relational Style with Influencing as their secondary style. Truth serves as the primary value in their both Root Value systems.

The most likely leadership of the two will come from the Influencing /Manipulator. The value of Truth partners with Commitment to solidify the Hermit's sense of

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purpose. The Hermit's purpose tends to be more conceptual than practical. They will enhance the influence of more active leaders (petty-Tyrants) who share their goals. Hermits prefer to work in the shadows. Look for indirect action that allows room for denial of responsibility on the part of the Hermit. Where Tyrants grasp swords, Hermits set traps.

When led by a Hermit, organizations evolve structure and direction reactively rather than proactively. Hermits tend to observe situations as they develop. They ponder meaning rather than act to control outcomes. This creates a void into which action-oriented leaders (petty-Tyrants) step in to take control.

Organic organizations form around Hermit leaders, as opposed to the hierarchy that forms beneath the Tyrant. The Hermit's propensity to escape creates space within which organizations evolve.

The role of the primary leader is Spectator. The leader's source of power tends to be institutional inertia. What *is* tends to remain. The status quo persists. Otherwise, in the absence of explicit direction from the Hermit, chaos reigns.

In conflict Hermits tend to yield, or at least appear to do so. They give ground rather easily compared to their Tyrant counter-parts. They seek acquiescence from partner-leaders, although they would never make that expectation explicit. Hermits will elevate weaker personalities rather than risk confrontation with stronger leaders. Avoidance describes this leader best. The organizational culture is defined by tradition. Communication is indirect.

In organic organizations lines of accountability are implicit and can be difficult for newcomers to discern. The formal "org-chart" does not necessarily reflect the genuine flow of influence.

Fiefdoms headed by secondary Tyrant-leaders dominate most processes and compete for resources. They carve out territories and turf that come to define the organization. In the absence of a collaborative environment, competition and conflict define the culture. The structure and processes emerge haphazardly as make-do solutions in moments of crisis. They come into being in reaction to external events or as a result of in-fighting.

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Where power in hierarchies is through domination, power in organic organizations is through manipulation. The structure is concentric. At the center is a void. Around the void, power-wielders circle in constant struggle with one another. Some organic organizations value the appearance of concord so much that the conflict remains passive, erupting periodically in crisis resulting in significant change. The most valued norm is compliance. “Don’t make waves.”

Types of Influence

To appreciate how the Tyrant and the Hermit influence their organizations, consider how change motors work in both hierarchical and organic organizations. Andrew van de Ven and Marshall Poole have identified two “constructive change motors” that drive change in organizations under the influence of leaders. A change motor describes a specific process that results in new structures, relationships or outcomes. Tyrants and Hermits empower different change motors in their organizations.

The Tyrant drives a Teleologic change motor. It assumes 1) a unified entity (be it individual, group or organization), and 2) an intentional goal. (The Greek word *telos* means, goal.)

Some individual or group plans, executes, assesses progress, and makes adjustments to action plans as circumstances require in pursuit of a clearly defined goal. Directing/Controllers are Teleologic change agents. Valuing Autonomy and Commitment, they identify very quickly challenges to be addressed. They define goals and pursue them. They can sometimes browbeat “followers” into conforming to their Teleologic action plan.

Contrast this dynamic with the Dialectical change motor. It assumes 1) multiply entities, and 2) competition. (The Greek word *dialektike* means controversy or argument.)

Opposing forces engage one another until one is defeated, or a new entity rises and surpasses previous contenders. Stability comes about through a balance of power. Change occurs when an oppositional force gathers enough energy to challenge and overcome the equilibrium of the status quo.

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The opposing forces in organic organizations are petty-Tyrants. While the Teleologic change motor requires a single entity driving change, the Dialectical change motor takes effect when more than one entity competes for scarce resources to pursue different goals. The Dialectical change motor drives a conflicted environment.

Hermits function in the Reflective Mode. When they recede into their interior worlds, active petty-Tyrants fill the void. When no explicit direction or structure comes from the Hermit (Influencing /Manipulator or the Exploring/Waffler) petty-tyrants engage in turf wars. An oligarchy of secondary leaders emerge as they achieve a tenuous balance of power.

Directing/Controllers find a leadership void intolerable. They take charge within their field of influence. Similarly, Inspiring/Rescuers struggle to endure the potential “harm” experienced by others in what they perceive to be organizational chaos. Wanting to protect “the weak” they step into the void to establish order.

In the absence of explicit action from the Hermit this oligarchy of competing interests establishes lesser hierarchies. Competition between petty- Tyrants drives the Dialectical change motor.

Opposing forces result in randomness in the development of the structure and processes of organic organizations. Order emerges as an outgrowth of struggle. It lacks intentional design. The outcome is a hodge-podge of make-do solutions that become institutionalized over time and resistant to change. Change comes only episodically and through traumatic conflict.

The Responsive Leader in Organizations

Contrasted with both hierarchies led by Tyrants and organic organizations led by Hermits, are collaborative organizations led by Responsive Leaders. Responsive Leaders may be anchored in either the Northern or the Southern Hemisphere on the PACT-L Model. They may be most comfortable with any one of Relational Styles. What distinguishes them from Tyrants and Hermits is not the Root Value system, but their self-awareness and a willingness to respond in relationship with others with the most constructive style given the presenting circumstance.

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Responsive Leaders call on the strengths of all four Relational Styles: Exploring, Directing, Influencing and Inspiring. They apply the practices associated with each style and call on others who bring their own corresponding strength to the leadership challenge.

When responsive leadership becomes the norm in an organization, leaders address problems in more constructive ways seeking insight from one another. They accept responsibility when necessary while also respecting the autonomy of others. The organization becomes a self-organizing and self-regulating community.

The goal of Responsive Leaders is engagement. Their priority is the shared success of everyone in the organization. Their role is that of a Contributor. Their source of power is the team.

Responsive Leaders welcome conflict as an opportunity for learning. They explore with others alternative points of view. They seek the participation of others. Their communication style is direct and multilateral. Communication flows in all directions without guile or subtlety, but rather with respect and an openness to allow the best ideas, perspective and insight to come to the surface.

If hierarchies come about through force of will, and organic organizations come about as competing interests fill a leadership void, the collaborative organization comes about through intention and invitation. People come together by way of informed choice. The collaborative organization is the outcome of a call to commitment by leaders working together in pursuit of common goals.

Like the hierarchical organization, the collaborative organization is a unified entity. But the Responsive Leader does not bring about this unity by force. Power is distributed among all participants. The primary leader serves as a steward of the culture and a gate-keeper of cultural norms. The leader continually models and calls others to greater relational competence.

Specific leadership rises up from whatever partner possesses the technical competence and experience to lead others in addressing a particular problem. Because power is shared, the structure of such organizations is networked. Nodes of competency link to the relevant resource hubs in a communication grid that allows ad-hoc teams to form around specific problems in a spirit of mutual support. Bonds

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of affection endure as teams disband as easily and informally as they form. After a specific task is completed, relationships endure. Collaborative organizations value partnership. Their norm is trust.

Conclusion

The Relational Style of leaders influences the nature of the organizations they lead. Any attempt to change the culture of an organization, without addressing the Relational Styles of leaders will fail. The organization will conform to the Relational Style of the leader as individuals adapt to the unspoken requirements established by the leader.

We recommend that a Relational Style analysis of leaders precede an investment in culture change initiatives. Once one determines the Relational Style of the leader, one may explore how this style influences the culture of the organizations. Understanding the genesis of the culture in the Relational Style of the leader provides a necessary step in any change process.

Secure the commitment of the leader to change before attempting to change the organization he or she leads.