

# Outer World Inner World

*& the personal  
barriers to change*

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# The blocks and separation that turn life into a battle zone.....

There's a good deal of talk these days about values, work/life balance, EQ and spirituality at work. Management philosophy errs in favour of softer, more caring approaches, but its not a philosophy espoused by all. The extent to which this new paradigm has truly embedded into the way we think and work is not easy to assess, bearing in mind the many elements that obstruct or hold us to the bottom line school of thought.

Within a business world that puts most emphasis on a rational rather than intuitive approach, how does the ideal of bringing all of our capabilities to bear actually translate into essential business practice? It is such conundrums that can turn life into a battlefield between opposing sides.

This Guide looks at those parts of ourselves and our lives that are often ignored, made wrong or left untended. It also looks at the blocks that interfere with personal and, by implication, organisational, development. We can see evidence of the problems that arise from surveys which continue to report that substantial numbers of managers are stressed, unhappy, dissatisfied and that their relationships out of work are suffering too. We believe that by bringing the inner world of our hidden thoughts, feelings and unconscious mind to greater awareness and allowing it expression and application in our outer world, we open up possibilities for ourselves and those around us to live more deeply and expansively. It is a question of what we choose for ourselves.

*To be nobody but yourself in a world which is doing its best to make you everybody else – means to fight the hardest battle which any human being can fight and never stop fighting.*

e e cummings

***Included in the Guide are extracts of conversations held with individuals about their inner and outer worlds. The dialogues explored their lives, their beliefs, their dreams, their history and family connections, areas of satisfaction as well as disappointment or loss. The intention was to acknowledge and validate those aspects of each person that often remain separate or unspoken.***

*Working to external goals is not enough*

If we live in a society where competition and profit are the values of the time, chances are we'll be likely to follow the trend, juggling our lives and organisations towards external goals at the expense of other factors. But there is part of us that needs to be sustained by other values and to draw meaning from an inner wisdom beyond the confines of our defined roles.

*Waking to a sense of emptiness*

Suppose then, that we live at a time when an underlying sense of emptiness has crept in to our awareness, when it's a struggle to keep everything going and articles in journals touch on the need for corporate soul and new leadership, what options do we have? Do we feel brave enough and motivated not only to question ourselves, but also to speak of what we know and what we feel? Do we face the challenge – to live and act authentically and not out of habit or expectation? If we want our world to change then change must begin from within each individual person and the relationship they have with themselves and with others. And it takes courage.

*Are emotions such a threat?*

Mechanical and technological innovations enhance our lives in many ways, yet might it be that human beings have become secondary in the process of supporting left-brain systems. Why exactly are our emotions and intuitive right-brain responses often considered to be inappropriate, even a threat, to these smoothly running systems?

What are the fears connected with uncertainty or in allowing ourselves to step off the well-lit avenue to explore the dark, winding alley? Complexity theories begin to respectfully acknowledge the deeper workings all around us, indicating that the world will never comply with purely mechanistic laws alone.

*Stepping off the treadmill.....*

If we considered our notions of productivity we might discover that they continue to be influenced by ground rules set down in the era of the Industrial Revolution and empire building, coloured by heroic beliefs of power and expansion. The modern hero nevertheless has the courage to stay open to painful feelings and to speak their emotional truth. Today's manager needs these emotional skills, although many of the people we spoke to indicated that the actual reality is more to do with suppression of inner responses, non-communication, or a genuine difficulty in expressing feelings, and even unconscious collusion, to the extent that one person stated,

*"If you don't know in the first place how you feel it's difficult to express yourself".*

*We have polarised and separated off whole parts of ourselves*

A split between our inner world and outer worlds, screening off parts of ourselves in order to focus on the rational and productive is not unusual. Another person said:

*"I haven't wanted the pain of thinking deeply about myself. I'm not sure I could even unlock the door now."*

# Strength and Power

*Other polarities that we try to split off*

James Hillman in his book, *Kinds of Power*, examines the prevailing economic cultural influences of Growth and Efficiency, and considers the approaches of Service and Maintenance as new paradigms for the next century.

*Doing everything we do as if it makes a difference*

He points out that the mind-set involved in Growth and Efficiency is vastly different from that to do with Service and Maintenance. These differing approaches reflect two opposite ends of a spectrum, for example, left brain and right brain or the Masculine and Feminine principles. Either end of the spectrum is informed by differing energetic laws each equally valid, yet easily distorted through a lens to do with what is most powerful. Perhaps we are moving towards a future where Service and Maintenance will be felt to contain strength and power.

It has been traditionally accepted that Western society is influenced by masculine and left brain energy (in *both* men and women). Ideas of what it is to be powerful have much to do with demonstrable outward energy. An example from World War II demonstrates differences in attitude: the daring and speed of fighter pilots was apparently viewed as more heroic than the bomber pilots, whose strengths lay in endurance and fortitude.

We all have within us a mixture of Masculine and Feminine principles i.e. the Masculine principle is not exclusive to men and the Feminine principle is not exclusive to women however. Carl Jung called the inner feminine the Anima, and the inner masculine the Animus. (More about this under the heading “Sol and Luna”). Increasingly the view is that a balanced work approach must embrace emotional insight as well as intellectual clarity, but what of the old bastions of power?

*An exercise:* Consider there are three ways that we could look at power: Power Over, Power Less, Power With. The words of each category carry loaded images as the chart below demonstrates. The dynamics of Power Over and Power Less may continue as traditional influences in the workplace. Nevertheless, these days there is an increasing identification with Power With, a more enabling kind of strength.

Consider for a moment yourself and your colleagues, and how you feel that the dynamics of power are expressed in your organisation:

<b>Power Over</b>	<b>Power With</b>	<b>Power Less</b>
Dogmatic	Responsible	Nice Guy
Demanding	Holding personal ethics	Selfless
Over responsible	Comfortable with paradox	Wholesome
Defensive	Direct	Vague
Aggressive	Insightful	Dependent
Dominating	Humorous	Naïve
Rule Bound	Vulnerable	Wounded
Numb	Mentor	Soft
Controlled	Vigilant	Pleaser
Analytical	Flexible	Gentle
Tough	Selective	Irresponsible
Cynical	Receptive	Submissive

*“Some say knowledge is power, but that is not true. Character is power.”*  
S S Baba

Think of the word “surrender.” It might contain negative messages to do with conflict or losing heart, or even mean, “don’t give in.” It might however be more to do with being strong enough to trust and accept, staying with uncertainty and not needing to have everything pinned down?

Without the ability to surrender in some way rather than defend, there will be war either physically or psychologically.

## Left brain/right brain

Studies of the brain define very different processes for the left and right brain function.

Once again, to consider that one is more powerful than the other is to defeat the possibility for allowing both to work together. The less tangible with the visible.

<b>Left brain</b>	<b>Right brain</b>
Words	Rhythm
Logic	Spatial awareness
Numbers	Seeing the whole picture
Sequence	Imagination
Linearity	Daydreaming
Analysis	Colour
Lists	Dimension

Tony Buzan: *Use your head*

Synergy happens when the parts work for the good of the whole. In fact, tests have shown that reason works better when emotions are present – for example, awareness is heightened and vision acuity is greater.

*An exercise:* This is a relaxation exercise that takes practice. The intention is to relax the body and mind, focus on ourselves and make space for inner quiet rather than mental noise. It’s not a question of forcing or censoring thoughts or feelings, but allowing yourself to let go of what holds you to the rational in order to step into new or unexplored territory, without moving towards any set outcome or goal.

- By allowing yourself to physically relax, sitting with eyes closed, your back supported comfortably and your feet resting on the floor, hands at ease in your lap, you are calming some of the internal chatter within your own system. Run an imaginary eye slowly through your body and see where you feel you are holding tension. If you can, imagine it sliding away down your legs through to the floor, so much the better.
- Focusing on your breathing - the quietening effect of gentle, slow breathing should become quickly obvious. It is particularly calming to breathe out for a longer time than the in-breath. Focusing attention on the sensation of air as it enters your nostrils helps too to centre you.
- With the body quieter, you can be more aware of how your mind is constantly at work, threading together myriad thoughts, sailing, leaping or hopping from topic to topic. Your muscles might still be primed for action and your mind

alert and speeding – it's a habit that's hard to stop even if you want to. From a quieter position you can be the observer of your thoughts. Each thought is like a cloud that drifts across your mental horizon. If you find yourself hooked into a thought, don't criticise or be impatient, just be aware of what's happening and let the thought drift away again, as clouds do.

- Rather than applying linear thinking you are allowing your brain to meander as it wants, to take whatever path it wishes, and you are watching as it happens. Perhaps you will find that the thoughts have a life of their own.
- Observing thoughts rather than aiming to be in control of them can give a sense of how the brain likes to play or be creative in making connections, and how it can be informed by other things than rational structure.
- This exercise might provoke some discomfort and you might feel you want to get up and get on with things. Physical discomfort and mental anxiety are all part of the clever defences that we can set up for ourselves if we feel challenged for whatever reason. We can either choose to be led by it or to stay with discomfort and go across an edge into uncharted territory.
- Meditation and relaxation demand time and mindfulness. The payoff may not be immediately visible or justifiable, but being in closer contact with one's inner wisdom as well as outer knowledge has immense value for the individual and those around them.

## Survival at the expense of part of ourselves

*Efficiency or wellbeing?*

Old paradigm thinking has maintained, ironically, that to be fully effective and powerful one must stifle or neglect a vital chunk of one's emotional responses. If this system identifies with control, detachment, certainty, the right image, future orientation, and status, then emotionality might seem to muddy linear processes.

*How much of ourselves do we deny?*

Whilst the current climate is moving towards greater acknowledgement that our emotions are as necessary for our psychological survival as our senses are for our physical wellbeing, (when we taste food that is bad we don't eat it, when something is painful to the touch we pull away our hand) there nevertheless remains an expectation that if we experience, say, fear or disappointment we bundle it away behind a steely façade.

The issue here is often a very real distrust of letting down one's guard in front of others, along with anticipation of criticism rather than understanding. Uncertainty, and resulting feelings of anxiety, can be carefully managed by self-control and protective rationalism, but the cost to ourselves is very real.

*Identifying the beliefs we hold about ourselves*

We are heavily influenced by beliefs about being productive and impacting. Distilling the beliefs we hold about ourselves down to one "core belief" can be an interesting indicator of where we position ourselves and how driven we might be. Many of the people we spoke with had an outwards/forwards aspect to their core belief. When people were encouraged to focus more closely on the essence of their belief they touched on a more immediate and personal view.

*“I want to be there as a person who can be relied upon to address issues for myself and the good of others” became “I am a shepherd tending my flock, but the flock isn’t caring for me”.*

*“The purpose of my life is to journey and grow in understanding of relationship” became “I feel I’ve just been hatched and that I’ve started to understand”.*

*Watching our backs*

At some level in everyone, competitive spirit vies alongside the fear of appearing incompetent or weak. Perhaps this fear taps into a primitive instinct where for example, a buck, knew that if it displayed weakness it might be killed or lose out in the chance to demonstrate its prowess? How swiftly can one be metaphorically attacked and brought down in an organisation?

*Survival responses*

In flattened and downsized organisations survivors may have made it through the cuts, but their feelings of personal control and sense of self may have been severely rocked. Softer styles as a result might well be squeezed out by symptoms of “survivor syndrome”:

- low morale
- lack of trust
- fear
- anxiety
- decline in commitment
- hostile environments
- worsened relationships

Making sure one has a defensible standpoint, always filtering and testing just how much of oneself it is safe to share in the daily joust then takes precedence over affiliation.

Taking only a pragmatic view when it comes to restructuring, without fully accounting for human needs, can mean that anticipated productivity gains don’t actually materialise.

Do we believe we can achieve another way to earn our daily bread?

## Sol and Luna

The medieval pursuit of alchemy is generally associated with turning base metal into gold. Its metaphorical significance however is connected with the quest to discover the pure essence of human existence. (Charles Handy uses this concept in *“The New Alchemists”* when he identifies individuals who have created something special out of their own brand of spirit and vision).

The work of alchemists was a synthesis of the knowledge of empirical science and mystical philosophy. The symbolism was to do with dragons, kings and also the figures of Sol and Luna who represented Masculine and Feminine principles. We use the names here to stand for the outer Sol reality and inner Luna reality.

Put simply, Sol is bright, to do with growth, outward and “in your face”. Luna is not easily discernible, to do with maintaining,



inward and mysterious. Historically, Sol has taken credit for making things happen in the business world, yet it is now the Luna principle that is increasingly acknowledged as we talk about shifting our perceptions of effectiveness, power and business in general towards a more balanced understanding of processes. It is from the encounter rather than the polarisation of Sol and Luna that a new power emerges, connected with union and “flow”.

It seems also that many of us have lost the ability to easily surrender to things bigger than ourselves and, when Sol and Luna are kept separate and isolated from each other, we don't flow. One person spoke of their Luna aspect as a place, by water, where they felt on holiday, but that it was a foreign land that was far away.

Luna may be less outwardly evident or imposing than Sol, but when this principle is ignored or dismissed it does make its presence felt. Luna is the aspect that causes moods, disharmony between colleagues, mess – intangibles that can't be pinpointed or easily straightened out. Luna appears in dreams too. A man might dream of a seductress, or a witch, or a maiden. This is his Luna principle. If the dream figure is distressed or angry, the dreamer should look to his inner and outer worlds to see what is triggering this unease with his Luna. Dreams that occurred at the time of dialogues were related to us, and below are two that illustrated Sol/Luna dynamics:



*One dreamer did not normally recall their dreams, however on this occasion (which fell between two of our dialogues) they dreamt of a woman (Luna) who was distraught. She was being evicted by her landlord (Sol). The dreamer spoke to the landlord with “powerful and brilliant arguments” as to why the landlord should show more compassion to the woman. This brought the dreamer closer to the landlord – “The weight of my humanity in taking on the cause of this woman formed a bridge between us.”*

The dream indicated a conflict situation between Sol and Luna within this individual. The dreamer cared very much about what they called the loss of humanity in every day life and the way the softer side is shut out. The dream is experimenting with how such opposing factors can be reconciled. Luna has been evicted so much in the past, but the dreamer is optimistic of a different way.

*The second dreamer dreamt of going out with a girl he'd known at school who in fact had dated his best friend. At first he couldn't understand why he had dreamt of her as he had not thought of her for years. He told me that in reality she had gone on to have a disastrous marriage, and been quite reckless with drugs after that.*

There was a sense of regret and sadness for her. It would seem that she appeared in the dream as the Luna who was uncared for and who had therefore taken on an explosive, uncontained aspect in order to make her presence known. The dreamer connected this dream with wanting more caring and understanding for himself as in his current life he felt he had to keep himself held in, that no-one really knew what his world was like for him.

In order to know all of ourselves, both the Sol and the Luna aspects need to be expressed and lived. These two principles will always exist in dynamic tension with each other – the dance between the energy of the head and the heart that must be in constant communication if stagnation is to be kept at bay. The table below illustrates further what results when Sol and Luna principles either flow together or are kept separate:

<p><b><i>Flow together:</i></b> <b><i>EXPANSION</i></b></p> 	<p><b><i>Kept apart:</i></b> <b><i>DISTORTION</i></b></p> 
<p>Living fully with one's resources Cultivating/developing Generating Belief Creativity/ beauty Flow/choice Openness/curiosity Generosity Truth/understanding Love Discovering Spirit</p>	<p>Marginalising oneself Fear of failure Abuse Fear Time running out Rigidity Tightness/fixity Greed Isolation/confusion Exploiting Conquering Oppression</p>

## New paradigms

If the old paradigm seeks to maintain efficiency, being right-first-time, keeping ambition and drive in tip top condition (along with a battery of defences?), and never quavering (at least not in public), the new paradigm calls for dismantling defences, accepting and valuing oneself and others, a flexible approach, creating a safe environment for people to speak truly, taking time, allowing for unspoken mysteries and believing that rational thought is part of our story but not all of it.

*Human resources or human beings?*

New paradigm thinking draws on a full range of emotions and from this palette works with what is authentic and true. It is easy to stay hooked by the pace of competition and by dominant behaviour to maintain power and status whilst in pursuit of the bottom line. New paradigm behaviour stops to question the traditional premises of decision making. What of the organisational double or even triple bottom line – where concern for people as well as the environment take equal place alongside profit? The shift needed is in one's perception and perhaps some more corporate conscience.

*New energy*

When it comes to clarifying this differing dynamic, perhaps thinking of “flow” rather than “achievement and delivery” might help. If you were to imagine a river – the sound of it, the temperature, the scenery around it – as it meanders or rushes,

shallow pools or going deep, even going underground, being able to plummet and continue on, accommodating rocks and trees in its path – this energy is akin to “life force” that *needs* to flow if we are to thrive. It is not a conveyor belt. Blockages cause the flow to stagnate and become choked.

*Seeking heart and soul*

What sadly neglected in the exhilarating ride of Progress since the Industrial Revolution, and more recently since the Technological Revolution, is that we are more than our role, our effectiveness, our status.

Something within us in our early twenty first century Western world is unsettled and yearns for something more in our working lives. It seems that this is to do with bringing heart and soul to work. It is interesting to note that the word “courage” shares the same stem as the French word “coeur” – heart.

A profound sense of self-worth and dignity comes from the courage we show – be it making a stand, forgiving, stepping down, facing great difficulty.

For some however the workplace can be much less “a factory for the production of goods and than much more an incubator for the human spirit”.

## Blocks to change

The benefits the new paradigm may not be very “sexy” to those caught up in competition or expectations to “deliver”. In these instances, the option to open to one’s fear, vulnerabilities and a sense of humility towards life might not seem very appealing. So the blocks to change remain in place.

### **Fear**

Fear, be it in the form of bluster, bravado, constraint or hesitancy, is the foremost block to change.

- ‘Workaholism’ might be a way to avoid one’s feelings or one’s family. Burying ourselves in a heavy workload and long hours is a tough habit to crack, especially as the Hard Work ethic is so highly regarded.
- Or we might possibly aim to keep our heads down rather than risk of criticism or rejection, or inhibit change initiatives for fear of being exposed.
- We might even be masterful at denying that there is anything that troubles us, plugging on with maintaining the status quo in our area of control and turning away from anything that might disrupt this.
- We can always tell ourselves that we are far too busy to get involved in other matters even when they are set down before us as the “new way”.

Do we subordinate others or parts of our selves because we don’t think of them as adequate? Our responses often reveal more about us via attitude or behaviour than we might imagine.

*The worst prison would  
be a closed heart.*  
Pope John Paul II

The principle positions an individual can adopt in their relationship to the world have been identified in terms of who feels OK and who doesn't feel OK:

- **I'm OK, you're not OK** - this person in this position projects any blame or guilt away from themselves or seeks to subordinate others in order to reinforce their OK'ness. Criticising others can stem from the fact that this person doesn't really feel OK with themselves at all.
- **I'm not OK, you're OK** - the person who feels that the world doesn't have much to offer them, and who chooses to identify with the role of victim. Circumstances will usually evolve to maintain them in that position.
- **I'm OK, you're OK** - this position allows for openness and learning, and where no one is being subordinated or held back, unlike the two previous.

These positions or core beliefs reflect strategies that have been adopted in order to survive. However they often remain unrecognised by the individual. Bringing the strategies to light through conversation, perhaps with a coach or mentor or in a facilitated group, offers the individual the opportunity to acknowledge "what is so" and clarify where they feel blocked, what they want for themselves, thus reviewing those beliefs or behaviours that hold them back.

*Speaking on the outside  
what we feel on the inside*

### **Issues of Communication**

The first models of communication that we witness are usually amongst our immediate family. Perhaps back then Luna struggled to be expressed and, as in the family, so in the paternalistic domain of work, old patterns will continue to play themselves out. People very often feel that it is easier to talk to a woman, and that they hesitate to let their guard down by talking to a man. Where does this belief come from?

One person told me of the way their father avoided any emotional communication:

*"He is rarely direct, and if he is it is only sustained for one or two sentences. But he has a certain code - he keeps himself to himself and doesn't burden others. But he didn't communicate any ability to deal with emotional and life problems. I feel very self-taught in that respect."*

Another person told me that their father had not been favoured by his parents due to a physical disability from early childhood, and thus his artistic talents had been overlooked. There was much sadness at this person realised that their own drive to make an impact on the world was in part to make amends for their father's loss. In addition they felt that communication with their father was not and had never been adequate:

*"I don't have words that I feel comfortable using with him. There's so much groundwork that needs to be done before I could have a meaningful conversation. Where do you start with a man in his 70's?"*

A “stiff upper lip” approach might still colour our thought and behaviour, yet people have, on many occasions, expressed regret at not knowing or having known their father better. Equally, at the end of our lives will we look back and regret we had not shared more of ourselves? Are we willing to listen to our gut feel and communicate from that level of truthfulness?

In another conversation someone described how communication had altered during the last month of their father’s life. Whilst there had always been discussion of common interests...

*“... I was a bit nervous talking to him about anything serious or personal – he was quite strict. But we talked a lot more when he was ill. A month before he died I kissed him for the first time in my life and he said, ‘why are you kissing me?’ Then after that he’d say, ‘where’s my kiss?’ Its interesting how attitudes change.....”*

*The face we choose to wear at work*

### **Masks**

“Who am I?” is perhaps the most terrifying question of all. How we choose to define ourselves might only be part of our story, it might only be the mask. Masks are one way we have learned to protect ourselves, but much depends on how we manage them and what we conceal behind them. What if the mask never leaves space for the true person behind it? What would it be like to remove the mask and trust that we are acceptable as we are – vulnerabilities and all?

We asked several people to imagine a mask that they wore, and how it felt to wear it on the inside and how it looked to the outside world:

*“It is thick and heavy and not very expressive. Part of me feels comfortable wearing it as its like a suit of armour. So I tolerate it even though I don’t really want to wear it. With it I’m totally defending and defended. Without it I would have a certain freedom of responsibility – I mean a responsibility that I wanted to have, rather than had to have.”*

*“Maybe it’s a bit concerned and a bit stressed. But it’s not much different to what I am.”*

*“I have three masks going from stressed to jovial. The stressed one is the least comfortable. I would be far freer not wearing a mask but it wouldn’t be practical because of the way others would react to me (...) – the conflict is between being and having to do.”*

*“It doesn’t feel entirely true – it doesn’t articulate perfectly with me. Its malleable – so it feels like its up to me to make it fit.”*

If we are prepared to challenge old patterns we have the chance to trigger a greater understanding of how we position ourselves now and how we would like things to be different.

*“Most men don’t know how to express and unless there’s some crisis they won’t break out, they are too frightened.”*

*How much do you have to put up with and how long do you have to go before you get to crisis point?"*

Acting without blocks or fear means being prepared to let an issue flow without controlling it at every move, acknowledging feelings of uncertainty, telling others "I don't feel good about this" or "I think we need to sit down together and talk this through", focuses on staying open to the flow and process of change.

## Irrefutable but nonetheless painful truths

There are four fundamental realities that confront us with our human fragility. We might prefer to turn our attention away from them, and yet to get a measure of our strength and courage it is necessary to accept the fact of our mortal limitations – like swallowing bitter medicine without any sugar. The challenges that usually seek us out anyway are:

- Death
- Meaninglessness
- Isolation
- Freedom/responsibility

### *Facing fundamentals*

They are introduced here to underline that as long as we avoid or repress those things we don't like the idea of, they control us and, as much as we try to hide from them or push them away, they find a way of creeping up on us sooner or later. By turning to face the unknown or the thing we are afraid of, those things are robbed of much of their power. Our attitude and our will are all – keeping us free, or blocking off our vitality.

### **Death**

It is fear that colours all our survival mechanisms, and the ultimate fear is of death. The fear that flickers across our minds with thoughts of not being good enough, of being left behind, of being discounted, disregarded etc. is connected to this.

Perhaps we're so busy we don't have time to recognise death, but it is there when our job is cut one Friday afternoon. Then the façade cracks. What falls away? Identity, car, self worth, colleagues/friends, partner? We thought everything was fine – at least it looked it from the outside. But inside what was happening? The relationship we have with our inner world at this time is what can help us get through. It has been observed that it was often those with a greater capacity for inner reflection that survived in concentration camps. When the outer world was a nightmare, having recourse to an inner strength gave the will to carry on.

A sobering but fortifying exercise is to imagine that you have been given twenty four hours to live. Imagine the scenario: what would you want to resolve, make good, celebrate? Who would you want to see, would you want to say things perhaps not

spoken of before or covered over? It's a bit much to do all this in one day. In order to live more fully, couldn't we make living more about doing and creating things that truly matter to us while hopefully we have longer than just one day to do it in. The easiest way to have a good death is to have a good life.

### ***Meaninglessness***

We tend to find meaning, on one level, through relationship and communication (Luna) and on another, in terms of success and proving oneself (Sol).

Use of overwork, drink or drugs is not uncommon as an attempt to avoid feelings of meaninglessness.

We might, however, locate meaning and purpose in the workplace around some or all of the following:

- Service to one's immediate community
- Service to future generations
- Having good colleagues and serving humankind
- Making money
- Doing interesting work
- Being associated with a good or ethical organisation
- Realising our full potential as a person

If pay and status cease to be the most critical factors, then finding other meanings often tends to come through self-development. The benefit here is that these are meanings personal to the individual, and not generated by external drivers. Stepping away from the norm and discovering a deeper purpose is a way of bringing one's inner and outer realities more into harmony.

### ***Isolation***

Who do you feel comfortable really opening up to?

*"It would take a giant leap of faith that, if I shared my emotional life with another man, the act would not be misinterpreted or cause rejection."*

Feelings of disconnection and isolation stem in part from the pressure on us to mask our feelings and present a socialised face. We might not feel that it is acceptable to reveal what we really think or feel. One of the people we spoke with cited fear again as the primary agent:

*"My model of the world is that most people are frightened of others at one level, and that most learn to subsume it. So I'm never surprised if someone does breaks down (but it's seen by most as something to avoid.)"*

Someone mentioned corporate brochures showing two or more people staring into a computer screen, and how impersonal it looked:

*"What about eye to eye contact? We relate third party these days, what about relating directly!"*

In various other conversations about relationships it appeared that communicating via various third parties - future goals, technical detail, a shared interest – was a common experience. Less often was there open emotional discourse. Intimacy seemed to exist through a careful filtration of what one revealed about oneself – there was not much trust about.

The feeling of isolation develops as the world becomes more complex. We seem too busy working or fighting metaphorical fires to feel a sense of connection to self, our past and those around us to deeply connect with beauty, nature, art or love. It often takes a tragedy or loss to put us back in touch with our common humanity.

Dreams can help us experiment with new ideas or realities, rather as tentative probes before we consciously try out something that we need to do for our own wellbeing. The following dream indicated someone touching on an inner space within themselves which they usually denied and experimenting with a feeling of expansion and acceptance, without constraint:

*“I was going through a grand-looking entrance into an unrealistically spacious building, all white, with pillars. I felt I probably shouldn’t be there, but I was welcomed when the people there discovered that I’d suffered in the same way as everyone else there. The building opened out onto a vast space with fields and courtyards. I was taken around to meet other people there, and then I left. I had a feeling of being peaceful, not anxious or threatened - like the feeling you get when you walk around an art gallery”.*

Finding a space for ourselves, for solitude, is a proposition quite separate from isolation, yet solitude carries a hint of stigma of social failure and we might shy away from it. However, if we enter the Luna aspect of ourselves, away from the rush of the world, and let solitude work in us, we have the opportunity to listen at a deeper level to insights and wisdom from our inner world.

There is a story about early American settlers who used to beat pots and pans at night to keep the wolves away, and it seems that we are doing the same thing with our noise and speed to keep our fears at bay. Stillness is a great strength if we choose to embrace it.

### ***Freedom/Responsibility***

Freedom in the existential sense is about total responsibility in a world where anything could happen, where there are no absolutes or rules to define our lives, just chaos and anarchy.

Imagine how much our roles and the constraints of expectation help define our identity. If everything around us is a manmade construct of some form or another, when we take those away we come back to the uncomfortable question “who am I?” and “how do I define myself?” Freedom exists in dynamic tension with the limitation. But if there was no limitation to free oneself from or blame, then the more responsibility to oneself one needs and freedom becomes the chance to be whatever you want, perhaps to follow one’s life purpose.



# Quality of relationship

## **Relationships with others**

“I need love, to feel wanted, needed and useful” echoes a universal wish to be in relationship. How generous are we in our relationships however? How are we constrained by convention, habit or fears? Before we relate do we filter our responses according to whether we are in relationship with a ‘subordinate’, with a ‘peer’, with a ‘superior’? What of the fundamental elements intrinsic to all relationships?

Below are a few examples of the qualities necessary both for good performance and for good relationships. What are the dynamics of power here? Is good performance more important than good relationships, or do they have equal weight and significance? (You might think this is a bit of a trick question but its not!)

<i>Qualities for good performance</i>	<i>Qualities for good relationships</i>
Diligence	Support
Intention	Sincerity
Respect	Respect
Integrity	Integrity
Care	Love
Co-operation	Co-operation
Open to communication	Open to communication
Creativity/courage	Creativity/courage
Responsibility	Responsibility
Flexibility	Flexibility
Awareness of others’ needs	Awareness of others’ needs

### *The importance of attention and care*

*“During our second month of nursing school our professor gave us a pop quiz. I was a conscientious student and had breezed through the questions, until I read the last one: “What is the first name of the woman who cleans the school?”*

*Surely this was some kind of joke. I had seen the cleaning woman several times. She was tall, dark-haired and in her 50’s, but how would I know her name? I handed in our paper, leaving the last question blank.*

*Before class ended, one student asked if the last question would count towards our quiz grade. “Absolutely,” said the professor. “In your careers you will meet many people. All are significant. They deserve your attention and care, even if all you do is smile and say hello.” I have never forgotten that lesson. I also learned her name was Dorothy.” JoAnn C Jones. *The Heart at Work*. Jack Canfield & Jacqueline Miller. McGraw-Hill 1998*

## **Conversation**

Scientific studies show that Nature favours communication. Fritjof Capra in *Creativity in Communities* writes that a network of conversations, i.e. a shared system of beliefs, explanations and values that is continually sustained by further conversations, creates a feedback loop as a means of regulating and organising. This is not a linear process, but a spiralling one that remains open and listening.

*“To be a good manager you have to like people and be good at communicating. This is hard to fake. Establish a wide range of personal contacts within your organisation and encourage people to give you feedback on what they are thinking about the company and your role in it..”*

Bill Gates, Microsoft

Such a process means that the system can shift and adjust, with old structures falling away as new forms of behaviour or structures emerge. Capra says it is at that at this point of emergence and tension that creativity exists. Personal networks and informal relationships keep channels open for learning and sharing knowledge. Conversation fulfils a vital role therefore.

## **Relationship with oneself**

When we asked individuals whether they felt they could be kinder to themselves their responses indicated a tendency to disregard their Luna needs, perhaps at a cost to their wellbeing and health. Why is it that more men than women avoid visiting the doctor unless there is something *visibly* wrong with them?

It seems that relationship with oneself and one’s body tends to come after performance, with a lack of regard for the messages that could be heard if one stopped to listen. The heart attack becomes the wake-up call for many.

*“It’s a question of keeping myself on target.”*

*“I’m taking a more realistic view now – understanding when I’m exhausted and not blaming myself for failed deals.”*

*“Sure I could be kinder to myself – but it would be seen as letting myself off the hook. I push myself on to achieve.”*

*“I know I could relax more and worry less.”*

*“I could be a less demanding task-master. But I have changed since my heart attack. I am more forgiving of what I don’t do.”*

*“Kindness equals wasting time!”*

Acknowledging what energises us is important in maintaining a good relationship with oneself. Understanding why and when our energy levels drop is a way of keeping in tune with our inner motivations. Sol energy can arise out of, say, achievement and testing one’s prowess against stronger forces. Luna energy springs from, for example, opening to connection, love and beauty, and the belief that we can have this in our working lives. For balance in our relationship with ourselves we need the vitality

of *both* principles. We asked, “what makes you feel energised?” these are some of the replies:

*“When I have good relationships, when I feel I’ve really connected. Being in love.”*

*“Being inspired, particularly by music.”*

*“Riding the crest of a wave when I’m surfing.”*

*“Being in love. Doing work that I really enjoy. Experiencing beauty. Pulling off a coup.”*

*“Succeeding. If you’re in love you feel a lot more energy – being happy makes a difference to everything you do.”*

## Work/Life balance

Did you ever have the feeling of putting on your school gabardine to discover that sleeves had apparently shrunk, buttons didn’t meet with buttonholes, and you felt the tightness of something constricting that once served you, but now felt awkward? Sometimes we hold on to things that we have outgrown, or that have worn out, as it seems easier to stay with what is familiar than make room for new things.

Alternatively, have you ever noticed that when you find yourself in an unusual or stimulating setting the experience stays vivid and clear in your memory? Perhaps at that time we are more alert, curious, seeking to understand, to make connections, and look at things more closely. Stepping away from the well defined into the unknown, into uncertainty or anxiety, gives room for a different relationship between yourself and the world if you don’t block it. Being prepared to question without needing all the answers promotes awareness to new ideas and meanings as they emerge.

Our lives are frequently constrained - limited budgets, tight deadlines, small spaces, low ceilings, crowded pavements and roads. We doubt the food we eat, the air we breathe, the water we drink or swim in. Sometimes it feels that there isn’t much generosity or peace of mind anywhere.

Is our daily life just about keeping going? In order to make space for our inner lives the first thing is to slow down, observe and listen to the echoes within that want to be heard.

*“Feelings are like stories held in the body. If we begin to feel the feelings in the body, the stories emerge.”* Howard Schechter

Patterns of belief are set up by the expectations of others around us (from early on in life and by society). The fact of slowing down long enough to recognise when a familiar pattern is starting to crank into gear again gives us the possibility to choose whether we embark on it or decide on another way. Recognising that we have choice at some level is part of standing back and taking a detached view on our lives.

*"It is easier in our society to be naked physically than to be naked psychologically or spiritually."* Rollo May

At this juncture there may be more questions than ready answers, and feelings of disquiet. It often seems simpler to leave emotions and right brain issues at the bottom of the agenda and simply carry on.

But if you choose to look further..... just for a moment, bring your focus of attention to You, holding this Guide in your hand. Be aware of your eyes that are reading the words on the page, your brain that is absorbing the sense of them, your emotional responses. Can you calm your mind to stay in this moment of awareness of yourself? How long before other thoughts are popping back up? If you feel yourself becoming impatient, what has triggered that response? "This isn't telling me anything I don't know, anyway I've not got the time..." But maybe, underneath it all, a small part of you would like to step outside of the rush and be still - just for a little while.

Slowing down gives the chance to take a bigger perspective on one's life.

*"I don't give myself enough time. All my male mentors say 'hard work never killed anyone', and women say, 'Slow down.' The Japanese even have a word for 'death by overwork'....."*

Slowing down can also mean taking the time to assess whether we want to live in a *being* or *having* culture, and giving ourselves time to look fair and square at the existential facts of life. It gives us a chance to ponder over our lives, make profound connections with what we have experienced, our dreams, inner beliefs and values, memories of childhood, our inner world. It also gives us the opportunity to be increasingly aware of and responsible for how we speak and behave:

- do you challenge habitual beliefs that might hold you back?
- do you tell your truth?
- do you listen to others without judgement?
- are you patient and respectful of yourself?
- do you accept that you have ultimate choice in the way you are?

How easy is it to bring all of oneself to work? No matter how much we focus on performance, if we leave no place for the contribution from our inner world, our work will not entirely reflect the whole person that we are. Being effective is more than demonstrating our Sol nature at work.

## Values

You know deep down whether you feel good about what you are doing, and whether you are being the kind of person you want to be in an organisation that is congruent with your values. These are feelings that can guide you, or you might try to turn a blind eye for a whole myriad of pragmatic reasons.

Values aren't forced or manufactured – they simply arise within us and then become integral to impacting on our daily life and external reality.

It might be helpful to review the specifics of what is important for you, and whether you are in an environment that is congruent with your values, and how important that is to you.

<i>Values</i>	<i>Effects</i>
Honesty:	Truthfulness, avoidance or lip service?
Generosity:	Does the “bottom line” limit values, or is there a spirit of generosity, indirect reciprocity or compassion?
Contribution:	Is there room for personal contribution?
Community:	Recognition of connection and shared participation or isolation?
Responsibility:	Accepting long term vision and values or going for immediate pay offs and discarding.
Integration:	Co-operation and altruism - or “them and us” subordination?
Vision:	A big picture or ego positioning?
Courage:	Taking a stand for what you believe in spite of doubts or anxiety.
Clarity:	Self-insight or confusion?
Integrity:	Being true to yourself.

## Beauty

Beauty and values together form a benign and generative partnership. Beauty, as with values, is not a commodity but we are enriched by it.

It kindles a response within us that remains intangible and ephemeral. When we engage with beauty we respond not just with our senses but also with our emotions and with our being. It lifts us, and affirms our existence at a subtle level. It is soulful.

And beauty might also mean heartache too, when it echoes part of ourselves that we know and yearn for but feel distant from.

Where does one find beauty? Perhaps the poem over touches on a paradox of our existence – that we marginalise much of what lies beyond our Sol nature.

*Even if the flower fades it will be beautiful.  
Have you really observed a flower fading? It is beautiful.  
It has a sadness about it  
But who told you that sadness is not beautiful?  
Who says that only laughter is beautiful?  
I tell you that laughter is shallow if there is no sadness in it  
And sadness is dead if there is not a smile in it.  
They are not opposites, they enrich each other.*

Bhagwan S Rajnesh

# Leadership

Leadership can emerge in two ways:

- Mechanistically - to do with formulating mission, policies and strategy, and communicating them well.
- Organically - continually facilitating the emergence of new structures via relationship and communication, and incorporating the best of them into an organisation's design.

In other words, by creating conditions rather than giving directions, one nurtures an environment that encourages continual questioning and rewards innovation, and that acknowledges the freedom to make mistakes.

A combination of both styles of leadership make for a harmonious balance between Sol and Luna principles. A mechanical model alone is no longer appropriate or adequate to compete in the current business climate. An organisation is a living entity not a machine. Capra says, "An organisation which relies only on its designed structures will become rigid and unable to adapt to changing conditions" whereas emergent structures allow for the organisation to develop and evolve.

*"My experience is that people who succeed in the world of work, both independent people and people at the top of organisations, are not conformists. They are people who are fully themselves, and their uniqueness sets them apart."* Howard Schechter

Consider the role of a leader. What is their essence? What are their dreams? What is their life's work? The role of leader could be associated with that of the Elder who synthesises clarity, power and understanding as well as calling on inner strength and wisdom. The Elder is a person who views the big picture without being drawn into competition, criticism or ego defences. The Elder will make a stand for what they believe in and also acknowledge their weaknesses.

Perhaps we need more Elders to show the way.

When asked to envisage the qualities of a true leader, individuals touched on themes of wisdom, creativity, openness, kindness, solidity, awareness, generosity, vision and determination. Very clearly these leaders embodied both Sol *and* Luna qualities:

*"Someone you could totally trust, who was very understanding, who is caring, not critical, and loyal."*

*"Someone warm, open to others, not ostentatious, not over-stating, caring, comfortable with self, energetic, responsive and helpful to others."*

*"Someone gentle, understanding, with common sense and time for others, empowering,"*

*"Sensitive but with courage, determination, decisiveness, fortitude. Deeply thoughtful rather than aggressive and combative."*

*“Someone who has a belief in a beautiful vision and then over a lifetime creates a strategy of implementation with dedication.”*

There was one message that each of these figures unanimously expressed: “Be true to yourself.” The challenge is to acknowledge the power of individual choice and to respect our ideals and values. When we align ourselves with a sense of integrity and commitment, our wisdom, creativity, openness, kindness, solidity, awareness, giving, vision and determination shine through.

*“It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye.”*  
Antoine de St Exupery.

## Heart and Spirit

The God of Productivity dictates our material and ego survival, but when scant attention is given to the heart and spirit of an organisation something dies. Our need is to remember our heart and spirit too, and believe in something greater than ourselves.

Perhaps, somewhere amongst the rush and noise, we are bottoming out the ‘we have the technology’ myth and want to take a more simple and humble look at what it means to be a human being.

*“It’s a pity more people don’t get up at 3 o’clock in the morning to look at the stars, its then that you realise how small you are.”*

Perhaps we might even consider stopping the race long enough to see ourselves in relationship with both our inner life and the external world in which we are all players.

If you stopped maybe others would follow.