



The QUEST

Where the Mountains meet the Library

by the Drs. David and Alex Bennet



The Library at Mountain Quest Institute

(Photo by Jeff Morehead)

*Dedicated to all those who quest with us, and to those special colleagues
and friends who have touched and will touch the earth
where the mountains meet the library.*

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by the Drs. David and Alex Bennet
Mountain Quest Institute

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*The human experience is a neuronal dance with the Universe, with each of us
in the driver's seat selecting our partners and directing our dance steps.*

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Cover picture by Jeff Morehead

Preface

Do we ever really know how things happen? The Universe often has “things” in store for us that just *seem* to happen. This book began with an email from our dear friend Bob Turner. Alex had been working on several chapters for an upcoming IGI Global textbook, *The Preternatural Influence of the Media on the Singularity, Global Culture, and Government*. Bob has always been interested in our work—he was a partner in developing the expanded model for experiential learning—so, of course, Alex sent him a draft of the chapters. He responded:

Trust hooked me. This is a subject and message that is sorely needed. It doesn't matter what you say about it, so much as you've legitimized the urgency of raising it. [Bob has always been quite blunt.] If it could only be packaged together in a way that fascinates, intrigues, makes you curious, then makes you think. He went on to suggest chapters, all of which are included in this book, adding: *The book would introduce the experience and insight of two notable people on a quest for knowledge that creates value and fulfillment.* [He then noted that he was trying to write all this with five dogs in the house, and that he was definitely in the doghouse there. Jane, his wife and partner, dog-sits.]

So here it is. This is a book of big ideas, the very ideas that have continuously filled our minds and hearts over the past 20 years, bubbling up and down as we traveled the world, then settling into printed text when we returned home to Mountain Quest where the mountains meet the library, a beautiful valley set in the Allegheny mountains of West Virginia.

Each chapter is, it seems, a chapter of our lives, yet all of it blends together in a magnificent unfolding of thought and learning. How to share 20 years in nine chapters? Impossible, I think. Yet, YOU have been through those 20 years as well, on the same experiential roller coaster that has both titillated and challenged our survival. A global roller coaster that is still raging today through the highest points and most perilous curves.

As appropriate, at the end of each chapter are the books that emerged from that focus. Some of these are pretty heavy, more academic in nature, but others are more conversational as we began to write not solely for the academic community but for the graduate of life experience. If you are brave enough to engage with this thought, then we invite your reflections and questions. As we grow older, there are so many questions! And while we do not have a whole lot of answers, we are eager to share with you that which we have learned, as one point of view in an infinite number of possibilities.

In learning, *Alex and David Bennet*

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Where the mountains meet the library ...



The Wonder of Nature, Life and Learning

(Written circa 2006)

Who are we? Why are we here?

In the Allegheny Mountains of West Virginia, summer gallops in after a long winter of ice and the short breeze of Spring. In the green field adjacent to the farmhouse, our little Mountain Quest (“Mounty”) emerges from his pure black Polish Arabian mother into a new world, splaying long, thin legs in his first attempts to stand. Filled with determination and a natural sense of survival, he soon reaches his mother’s milk. This young colt grows with our dreams, dancing and playing across the waving grasslands of the future. In this latter part of our lives, we continue exploring growth and understanding in this age of change, uncertainty and complexity. We are building a place where individuals, groups and organizations can experience the wonder of nature, life and learning. We are writing and sharing what we have learned over two lifetimes, helping to turn the living system metaphor into a reality for others and their organizations. And in our quest for knowledge, consciousness, and meaning, we are engaging with others of similar mind and heart.

Everything we’ve done, everything we will do, is connected to this moment.

David: As a 9-year-old in the sandy land of East Texas, I play in the creek, watch squirrels jump across trees and am scared to death by the first coral snake I meet face-to-face. I dream of trapping mink in the summers and tracking rabbits in the snow. Life is simple, fascinating, and unquestioned. My young mind accepts as natural what I later—through years of living, thinking and feeling—come to know as the core of our reality.

Life is all around: bugs, beetles, dragonflies, blue jays, bulls, mules and tornadoes. Often, I wonder why am I here, what does everything mean? How was this world created? Why? There must be answers. But while the young often think fleetingly about the important things in life, we move on, becoming distracted and forgetting about the origin of our meaning, the fabric of our personal and social existence. We leave it for another day, another time, another place, perhaps another body, or even another life form.

Alex: As I sit curled in the velvet red curtain, tears streaming down my 12-year-old face, my heart dies a bit as Mimi softly sings her final thoughts “*Piangi? Sto bene ... Pianger cosi perche? Qui amor sempre con te! Le mani ... al caldo ... e dormire ... (You’re crying? I’m better ... Why do you weep like this? I’m here ... always with you! My hands are... so warm now ... I am tired).*”¹ On stage, Mimi’s head falls into my treasured rabbit muff (borrowed for the performance) and she is still. My own muffled sobs accent the roar of the audience. So sad. So beautiful. One day. One day that will be me.

David: After three years of playing in the woods and creeks, I discover the wonder of books. My life suddenly and unexpectedly takes focus when I read a copy of Einstein and Infield’s book on the evolution of physics. I am pulled into the physical world and its beauty, logic and truth. I may eventually be able to really understand how the things around me interact and to explain such mysteries! I simply know, from way deep down inside, that I want to be a physicist. To uncover the mysteries of the world is the best life I can imagine. I do not ask where this knowing, this desire, comes from ... perhaps a genetic peculiarity, an embryonic developmental quirk, a cultural perturbation? These provide neat answers to complex questions (dangerous thinking by a simple mind living in the universe of enormous possibilities). The more I read about physics, the more philosophy and even theology snuggle nearby, but physics is the center of my private universe.

Alex: Dad is always working. When mom is gone, my sister sneaks out (as usual). In our Cape Code house, typical of the eastern U.S. suburbs, there is a large rectangular mirror above the fireplace that reflects the open, railed stairway to the post-attic bedrooms. I create visions in the mirror, posing and dancing, first humming to form the mood, then breaking out into chants and rhymes, and finally reaching for melodies that rise and fall around me. As the tone builds, my heart flows into it, and an aura of sound engulfs me. The vision fades, no longer seen, only felt, but still as bright (even brighter) than when I began.

I hear the bang of a car door followed by my sister’s footsteps on the front stoop. The light is tucked in my pocket, the sound buried in my mouth, and I flit up the stairs and burrow under the eaves beyond the back of my closet. As I curl into a blanket, rain splats echo through the dark house-bound thinking-feeling chamber. I reach into the absence-of-light place within me and shiver, quickly grabbing a flashlight to remedy my dark thoughts. And while the light is on, I read several pages of Sartre’s *The Wall*. I trip through a number of unknown words, struggling to understand the actions of these people who, like me, are caught in a world in which they are afraid. The sound patterns of heavy rainfall pull me into a safe place, and I fall asleep.

David: I am 21 and teaching electronics in the U. S. Navy. Late into the evening, some other sailors and I sit on a grassy hillside on Treasure Island in the middle of San Francisco Bay. The starlit night is mesmerizing; we cannot pull our eyes away. Out of this feeling of beauty, grandeur and awe grows an intense need to know what stars are and where they come from.

At 28 while majoring in physics at The University of Texas, I ask many of the professors: What is mass? What is energy? What is an electromagnetic field? Where do they come from? *What do they mean?* The latter question is politely sidestepped, ignored, or deftly handed off to the Philosophy Department (the answers are not science, but philosophy, or perhaps theology). As I learn more about quantum mechanics and relativity, I come closer to the problems of understanding, but not to meaning.

Alex: The call was expected unexpectedness. “We’re going to have to do a Caesarean section to deliver the baby. You need to check into the hospital immediately.” This morning was my first inkling that something was wrong. Two weeks late, contractions on and off but nothing dramatic, and my 20-year-old virgin skin just growing larger and larger. When will the baby come? *“This is my answer. My name is woman. Age: Still young. Color of hair: Gray. Color of eyes: The color of tears. Occupation: Waiting. Waiting. Waiting. Waiting. Waiting. Waiting.”*²

My feet are in my throat. Can’t it just go away? I’ve changed my mind. No baby. My music is enough, my writing can fill the time, can make a difference. But the bulge is still there, rippling across my belly in defiance (perhaps excitement?) “I am more than my physical body” I repeat over and over to myself as I contemplate the knife (suddenly inevitable) slicing across my stomach. The words of my musical wondering about motherhood loop through my head: *“A little boy, a little girl, I wonder what the months will bring me? Your father’s eyes, your mother’s nose, and hair as red as it can be. Please be good, please be strong, never cry from fear. Say your prayers, never cease growing every year. A smiling face, a healthy grin, and sparkling eyes that say you love me. But most of all, be everything your father wishes you will be.”* And while the loop continues, I go about doing what must be done.

David: There are limits and limitations of science, and legitimacy in other ways of knowing. While teaching graduate nuclear physics at 32, I begin to recognize that the brain, the mind and the heart may offer alternate routes to knowing beyond science. Or, perhaps the life sciences are closer to truth than the physical sciences? I voraciously read and think about living organisms, evolution, consciousness, the mind-body problem, free will and the brain. The limits of language, the power of the unconscious and the influence of emotions all play a role in how we see and interpret our world. The limits of logic, mathematics and reasoning seem to spring forth whenever we try to get

them to answer the foundational questions: Who are we? Where do we come from? Why are we here?

Knowledge, meaning and purpose are locked up inside each other inside each of us, and the more we search for them, the fuzzier they seem to become. My ignorance of what could be looms larger and larger as I search through what I know and scan the ever-expanding landscape of what I don't know.

Alex: I would share the moment with you. Today was another prophetic disappointment for, according to our local and not-so-local psychics, at 1:00 PM today California was destined to suffer a major earthquake which would cause the final, rendering crack and subsequent slide into the ocean. Of course, this has been prophesized many times before, but since I am still standing now on the cool sands of the California coastline, I can testify that the time has not yet come, though I am sure it will eventually occur, as eventually the entire world will shift.

There is a hurricane up the coast heading our way, but a number of beachcombers stroll up and down the sands. Several determined fishermen and one not-so-determined, tired child tugging on his father's sleeve, stand casting lines from the pier into the angry water. A fickle breeze sends many a line back into the pilings, but the staunch fellows merely draw in the lines and cast again.

I slip out of my thongs and run past the inevitable products of man (dented soda cans, wrinkled candy wrappers, crushed cigarette butts) into the realm of the ocean (broken shells, assorted pieces of wood, swirling foam). Seagulls stretch along the ocean in groups, paralleling the raging waters, never venturing into one another's individual space. They remind me of the stage director's inevitable lecture about body space.

The waters are rising; the tide is coming in. There is much hidden debris below the churning water; as I run into the ocean small pieces of matter bang into my ankles and calves. I dive into a breaking wave and am held for a moment in suspension. Then the tension releases, the reversing currents tug me outward, and I struggle to the surface for a breath. I use a powerful sidearm stroke to go up and over the next breaking wave and into the choppy water beyond. It is impossible to maintain a straight line; the waves drive me to the left and inward, the undertow to the right and outward. A kelp leaf embraces my hair; a dead fish surfaces at arm's reach but rapidly disappears in the capricious water. Bubbles break the surface as my arms and legs work to maintain balance.

I glance back towards the beach. It is empty now. I reach a bouncing buoy, tap it, and head right towards a second buoy, swimming across the waves, rising and falling. My arms and legs ache with the effort. I try a refreshing back float, but am immediately

plunged downwards. I fling my limbs and resurface, enjoying the ocean's surge of energy, but wary now, and tiring.

The second buoy looms in front of me; I tap it and turn towards the shore. It is far away. Now I ride the surface waves. They shoot me forward, then I lose ground as the current reverses, then again forward. Exhilaration! Totally dependent on my own volition! Or am I? Inside, a small, nagging fear pushes to the surface. I am alone in the very midst of nature's raging power. Or am I? I feel the strength and cold of the water, caressing my body with passion. How wonderful to slide down and into her inviting arms!

All this as I catch the crest of a breaking wave and am plummeted into the shore. In its final embrace, the surging waters rip the suit from my chest and press my hair into my mouth. But I smile as I plant my feet on the moving sands, and take in the world that is still here. Into the increasing winds, I sing out to life in the full, rich tones of a dramatic soprano: "With all that I am, I love you." I am.

David: A military career, CEO of my own consulting firm, two wives and six children later I turn to religion for answers and spirituality for better understanding. I am in my fifties. While theologies make sense from a human existence viewpoint, organized religion parochialism and pronouncements of "absolutes" make me uncomfortable, but doesn't science work with absolutes? I am attracted to the wonder and beauty of everything in the Universe, but our place in it seems insignificant except, perhaps, for the connectedness of all things. If the answer is an all-encompassing One, then why are billions of humans excluded because they do not follow some specific religious proclamation? Spirituality seems more open, yet is filled with speculation and ideology. I am a scientist.

The press of life goes on. I never have enough time to think about the fundamental questions of life and the Universe. While contemplating Life, one must still live, and hope that purpose and meaning will spring out of either—or both. Purpose is not a single or simple concept; it is a concept of humans, not of the Universe. Purpose can be human intention, the source of causal relationships, or a deep, inner feeling or drive existing within each of us, and perhaps within all living things. Can life have a purpose separate from individual purpose?

On what basis do we believe or know anything? Are theories a part of reality? Does evidence while we're living a life of illusion really count? Can beliefs be felt, intuited, buried in our unconscious or experienced? If so, are they as valid as some repeated observations? If 100 scientists replicate an experiment does that make the results "more" valid than 10,000 monks practicing Buddhism and experiencing luminous emptiness? Each member of both groups may well be living out their own purpose. Is there a

purpose to science, a purpose to Buddhism, a purpose to the Universe? A fool can ask more questions than a wise man can answer.

Alex: I am in Japan on a Naval Base and spend the afternoon interviewing Mother Teresa. Now, from a raised stage in the larger hangar, she reaches out to the flocks of people crowding forward to touch her. *“The world has never needed peace so much as today. Where will the peace begin?”* Twelve hundred people pushing (gently) and shoving (softly) to reach her. I click hungrily, capturing joy and laughter, sadness and longing, in the lens of my camera. The task is nearly an impossible one. Heads and hands bob constantly in and out of my field. I am right there in front of her. A young girl beside me reaches out and presses Mother’s hand against her cheek. I get the picture. *“Small things are special to us ... Today people are so terribly busy that they have no time to even smile at each other”* Through the lens, those sparkling dark eyes in their small earth-worn frame turn to me. The twelve hundred disappear. My hand reaches towards her; the camera drops to the length of its neck strap. Her grasp is firm and carries with it a warmth that tingles my knuckles and spreads rapidly up my forearm. Our locked eyes reach beyond the soft pushing and struggling of the moment, and continue into our very souls. I do not know what she finds, but I find a love so deep, a giving so great *“I will pray for you, for your families, for the work you have to do. I will pray for you that you grow in holiness. For holiness is not the luxury of the few. It is the simple duty for every one of us”* She does not leave me. I still feel her hand in mine, though she is reaching for another, and another. Seconds become hours. I am content, at peace, and begin the journey to discover what she had found.

David: The years are passing. In my later life I see far more possibilities and few answers. Science does not contradict or disprove or disallow the existence of a One. The force between any two electrons extends forever as best our experiments can tell. It is only the magnitude of the force that becomes (perhaps) irrelevant. And who can say what magnitude of force is irrelevant? Focusing effects, butterfly phenomena, resonances and EPR non-locality all present possibilities that demand an open mind. With so much unknown, so many possibilities that we are too primitive to even imagine, it seems best to look inward first to know ourselves and learn about our own purpose, to teach ourselves about ourselves so we can understand why we do what we do. We can have purpose without knowing why!

Alex: My children are grown. I have spent the last ten years in school, exercising that side of my brain previously ignored, learning to sing through life from my head as well as my heart. I discover a different world where I am making a difference, a world focused on knowledge and change in a changing world.

I meet and marry my soul mate. One morning David wakes up with a vivid dream still ringing in his mind. Later that day—not yet knowing about his dream—I ask David

what he wants to do with the rest of his life. The question startles him; he has worked his whole life, and I'm not sure he's ever thought past being a physicist and learning as much as possible. One of the things I love about him is his ability to sit and read anywhere. (He's a joy to take shopping!) So, when I asked that question is when he told me about his dream, that he built a research and retreat center to help people and organizations grow and thrive in this rapidly changing, uncertain and increasingly complex world. The idea excited me, so I embraced it, and responded, "Then that is what we are going to do." He then asked me what I dreamed of doing. I paused and couldn't help smiling. Acknowledging that perhaps I was thinking on a smaller level, I shared that I'd always wanted to have a black Arabian mare and raise a little one.

We sit for a while and contemplate a somewhat pragmatic future. I was already in a PhD program, and David said he really wanted to expand his learning and focus into neuroscience and adult learning, which over the last 20 years had increasingly engaged his interest. So, he made a commitment to our future research center that he would get a PhD in that track. It was in the midst of this conversation that we first talked about writing a book together.

We build our dreams, all of them coming true, working through economic challenges, and continue building, continue sharing. We *know* this is our path ... it is visible beyond images, audible beyond conversation, sensible beyond appearances, and felt beyond emotions. And soon I move again inward, recreating the music of my soul, reengaging the dormant journey of my youth, and rediscovering the light within and the connectedness of all things. I explore the Reiki energy, and touch the sweet life of nature, the simple love of animals, and embrace the joy of watching the little ones grow.

David: As I move closer toward my seventies, I dwell more and more on the meaning (and purpose) of individuals, Life and the Universe. I cannot get away from the questions; perhaps we are not meant to do so? Placing ourselves within what we know (perceive? believe?), we each live about 75 years, a small part of the 13-billion-year age of the Universe. We are about 2 meters in size and can individually "look at things" roughly 10^{23} times larger than ourselves and 10^{-23} times smaller than ourselves. What a coincidence! We know many constants in the Universe are very precise in value, seem not to change over the short history of science and have values conducive to our existence as biological life forms., at least in this dimension. We also know there are many unexplained phenomena, many paradoxes, and that our language, evolution and adaptive characteristics have occurred over a very short time in a small, tiny part of the Universe. We also know that our brains and sensing systems are extremely limited while our minds (patterns in our brains) are almost unbounded. Seemingly, what we think we know has been created over a very short time of a few thousand years. Yet each generation we ask the same questions, produce a variety of answers, some consistent, many not. Meanwhile the Universe glides quietly on, expanding with or without us. We

push our destiny with great energy, always wondering about the important questions, forgetting that they are *our* questions, not necessarily our Universe's questions. Nature does not use our language, nor divide the world up into our categories. Perhaps we confuse ourselves with too much arrogance and too little understanding. Will we have better answers 2,000 years from now? Will our species even be here 2,000 years from now?

I stand in the middle of the Mountain Quest library, surveying the shelves and shelves of books, knowing that each one represents at least one person's life focus, and a large number have many more authors participating. Each person is so unique, and through individuation has so much to add to the whole. And I can't help it. Some books I pull down to read for a third time, underlining and notating, each time learning something new. Alex shares that she longs for the ability to run her fingers along the spines and instantly *know* what is within! (Sometimes I think she can.)

We must do what we must during our short time on earth. Search for our own meaning and purpose, remembering that we are only a small part of humanity, a smaller part of all life, and, as part of the Universal mind, a tiny-but-not-insignificant speck within our Universe. Being part of this One we must never forget our responsibility to each other and to the One. To do otherwise is to deny our heritage, our own existence, and that of our future generations.

If others believe as I do that everything in the Universe is composed of interacting patterns of energy, then the final question becomes who, what, and why does the energy exist, and the ultimate understanding rests upon an awareness that our own interacting patterns are now and always will be part of the set of interacting patterns that make up the Universe. Call them Goddess, the Godhead, the Vishnu, the Lord, or simply One. Does the name really matter?

Alex and David: We are all connected and there must be some explanation. Until—or if—we ever know, we all have a responsibility to fulfill our own purpose and, in the light of our greater selves, help others along their life paths, and help others help others ad infinitum. *“Amazing Grace ... how sweet the sound ...”*

We quest where the mountains meet the library.



Chapter 1

Dreaming Global Coherence

Dreams can and do come true. Even dreams we've never dreamed before! It took us a long time to realize the power of the human mind, that what we focused on, what we visioned in our mind and paid attention to, then moved toward with joy, actually WAS our reality. Note we didn't say BECAME our reality, but rather WAS our reality. *The dreaming of it was our reality*, and the physical stuff that emerged was a reflection of that dream reality.

How does all this happen? It certainly starts with the mind/brain, with the brain the physical structure, and the mind all the neuronal firings and patterns that are our thoughts and thinking processes. Attention is incredibly real. It actually pumps up neuronal activity, taking physical form that affects the activity of the body and, as we all know by now, thoughts affect the structure of the brain—and the structure of the brain affects our thoughts! And when this cycle is focused on our dreams accompanied by the high vibrational frequencies of love and joy and happiness, a wonderful flow *with* the field occurs, along with the manifestation of—and expansion beyond—our dreams.

Alex: One of those unvoiced dreams that popped up in mind every five or six years was becoming a Professor, learning from enthusiastic students who each were incredibly unique in experience and varied domains of learning and education, and committed to “becoming” more fully who they wanted to be, which is exactly what the journey towards a PhD is all about. Little did I know that I was participating in laying the path for that to happen!

As Deputy Chief Information Officer for Enterprise Integration and then in the role of Chief Knowledge Officer for the Department of the Navy (DON), a focus on knowledge and knowledge management in the late 90's—when the field was emerging—was exciting, and offered the opportunity for deep thought, reflection and learning. I had the unique opportunity to network and participate with others around the world who were leading this transformation of thought and action, and through honoring individuated and collective knowledge bringing people back into the core of the organization.

So much learning! In this emergent field of knowledge was the realization that our everyday conversations were laying the groundwork for the decisions we make in the future. When you think about it, this makes sense. Our minds are associative patterners, which means that everything coming in from the environment is being associated with everything we've already learned and experienced that is important to us, and stored in invariant form for future use. That's a lot of words, but a really interesting process! "Invariant forms" are core patterns that are stored in the neocortex in hierarchal fashion according to their importance to the individual. The capture of core patterns rather than exact replicas of past events or memories provides flexibility for future recognition and understanding of broader patterns. In other words, this helps make people more adaptive to their environments.

All this understanding coming out of the field of neuroscience led to the development of a pragmatic new competency, **Relationship Network Management (RNM)**, a self-empowering tool in social networking recognizing the move from relationship-focused value built on trust and respect of people with whom you have personal relations TO relationship and idea-focused value built on trust of structure (the workplace, partners) and people in that structure TO idea-focused value built on respect for and *resonance with ideas*. See Figure 1-1.

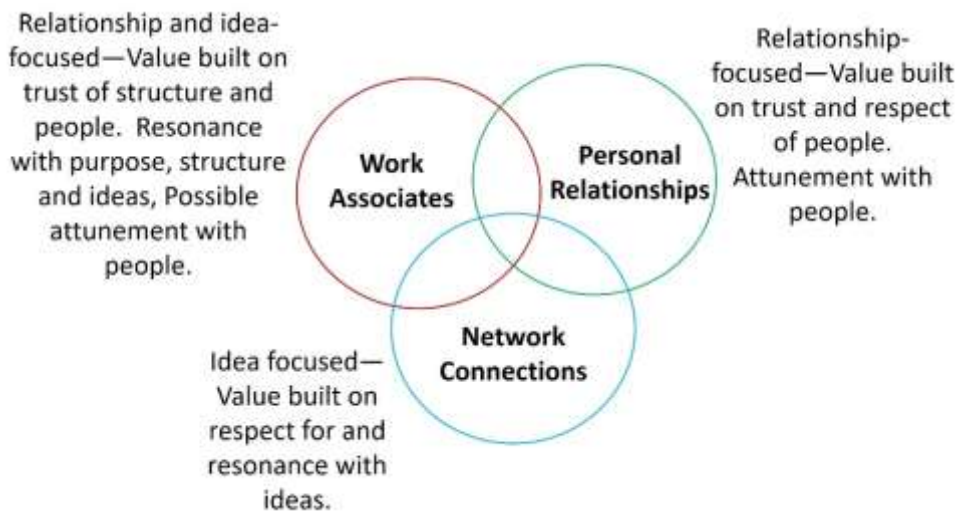


Figure 1-1. Idea resonance and trust.

In this new era of idea-based relationships—often with people around the world who we may or may not know anything about—trust has taken on new meaning. Note that there is the phenomenon of sequential linkages that comes into play and supports an individual’s willingness to trust. If I know someone that you know who was a close colleague of someone else who owns a company that another friend is a partner in, then we have a starting place for building some level of trust. Whew! Saw something similar to that in the military setting. When two people had served on the same ship or during the same conflict—wearing the same ribbon on their uniform—a common bond formed immediately on which to build a trusted relationship.

Simultaneously, from the other direction, there are those who open up themselves to negative circumstances by revealing too much too soon to an unknown force on the other side of the Internet. Unfortunately, as we have all learned and is occurring in our world today, we are all engaged in a battle of good and evil both in our external environment and with our internal shadow. Being human comes with its perks and its challenges!

The trust of, and respect for, one’s ideas does offer a level of trust if those ideas resonate among the participants of the exchange. To engage in this type of intellectual exchange, which provides the foundation for building idea resonance in a networked setting, requires us to have a level of *self-trust* in terms of both intellect and self-confidence in our own perceptions and ideas. Fortunately, this doesn’t seem to be an issue for the Net Generation, who have unconventional ideas that they are not afraid to voice and share.

The Role of Trust

In the past, trust meant that you could rely on the integrity, ability or character of a person, thing, or process. Trust was built up over time. However, in today’s world, where everything happens quickly and often over the Internet, virtual trust is not only trust among individuals and groups communicating virtually—and trust of the ideas being communicated, that is, the idea resonance introduced above—but also a trust in the technology, the hardware and software used to communicate (security, reliability, accurate transmission, etc.) and the information being exchanged.

The trustworthiness of information can be considered from a number of viewpoints: (1) its relevance to specific objectives; (2) its quality (accuracy); (3) its timeliness; and (4) its completeness. Of course, trusting information also means trusting the *source* of that information, whether it comes from a person, organization, database, webpage, book

or social network. Since *trust is a feeling*, trust of self (as noted) is also paramount. Feelings and emotions are different. Feelings are private, inwardly directed; emotions are public, outwardly directed.³ While the *feeling* of trust may or may not be connected to emotions, it will undoubtedly *affect* emotions, especially when it is broken.

While the system of self is robust and has a high level of trustworthiness in relation to our personal desires and beliefs, it's not perfect. Much of what affects our individual feelings and decisions is unconscious, where biases and beliefs may reside of which we are unaware. Further, the uniqueness of context and content of a situation—coupled with the complexity of a situation and uncertainty of the environment—pose the danger of us oversimplifying and relying on those largely unconscious beliefs from past experiences which are no longer applicable. As time speeds up and the world continues to change more rapidly, with unexpected twists and turns, old beliefs and theories become inappropriate and outdated and so, in other words, untrustworthy.

The Culture of Connection

In a 2017 G-LINK-sponsored conference “Leading Digital and Cultural Transformation” held in Bangkok, my keynote address was focused on “The Culture of Connection”.⁴ Culture—the ideas and values of a people, which include systems such as language, religion, art and science—emerges out of the abilities that set humans apart from other animals: the ability to control our attention, remember, abstract and reason. I took the listeners back to the 1869 work of Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy: An Essay in Political and Social Criticism*, who said that the use of cultures is *what helps us, by means of its spiritual standard of perfection, to regard wealth as but machinery, to really perceive and feel that it is so. And, if it were not for this purging effect wrought upon our minds by culture, the whole world, the future, as well as the present, would inevitably belong to the Philistines, people who believe most that our greatness and welfare are proved by our being very rich, and who most give their lives and thoughts to becoming rich.*

Not done yet, wanting to make sure his point was understood, Arnold goes on to ask us to consider these people—their way of life, habits, manners, the very tones of their voices—and to look at them attentively—observing what they read, the things that give them pleasure, the words that come out of their mouths, the thoughts which make the “furniture of their minds”. He then asks us: “Would any amount of wealth be worth having with the condition that one was to become just like these people by having it?”⁵ Wow! Somehow 1869 seems so long ago, yet, considering our world of today, this guy hit the nail right on the head! (Guess that expression ages me.)

I had to go back and check the (on-line) dictionary to make sure I understood what the term philistinism meant, and sure enough, it's descriptive of anti-intellectualism, a social attitude that undervalues and despises art, beauty, spirituality and intellect, with a philistine person someone who is smugly narrow of mind and conventional morality, whose materialistic views and tastes indicate a lack of and indifference to cultural and aesthetic values.⁶ There sure are a lot people in our government, our businesses, and frankly around the world, who meet that description.

Still, there is no question that we *have* moved into a Culture of Connection, with both good and bad characteristics emerging from the “All-Seeing-Eye” of the Internet. Off the top of my head, the characteristics that come along with this culture include: immediate communication, instant gratification, spontaneous judgment, idea resonance, collaborative entanglement, virtual transparency, political positioning, ephemeral drama, artificial intimacy, cognitive neurogaming, intoxication and addiction, and catfishing/Internet predators. Let's just look at one example, virtual transparency. Our desire for immediate gratification opens channels for exploitation. Because of this visibility, our ideas, thoughts, opinions, needs, and wants are manipulated for political and economic gain. Our accessible and accumulative histories—medical, experiential, educational encompassing the physical, mental, and emotional—NOTHING IS SACROSANCT—are blurring the lines between public and private enterprise.

Now, here's an interesting point. Depending on which generation you “came to age” in, you are going to have a different viewpoint than those who are older or younger. From a short survey of Baby Boomers (1946-1964) and Millennials (1981-1996), the generation exiting and the adult generation coming into leadership jobs, here's what we've learned. The Baby Boomers entered a world throbbing with materialistic potential and promise. Their parents lived through World War II and the Depression, so Baby Boomers were generally raised to honor the all-mighty dollar. For them, the global connection intensifies and facilitates invasion of privacy, energizes loss of individuality, reduces deep communication, intensifies paranoia, and enables bully leadership. For Millennials, the highest-spending generation and potentially the wealthiest generation in U.S. history, the Internet is—and always has been—the norm. They are not constrained by old concepts and prejudices. For them, global connection promotes mutual influence, invigorates creativity, illuminates understanding, expedites problem solving, and eliminates cultural boundaries.

What we all *can* agree on is that we live in a CUCA world. We think of this in terms of accelerating Change, rising Uncertainty, increasing Complexity, and the Anxiety in the individual that ensues. As we wrote in the ICAS book, which is the focus of Chapter 2, “Time accelerates. Distance shrinks. Networks expand. Information over-whelms.

Interdependencies grow geometrically. Uncertainty dominates. Complexity boggles the mind.”⁷ More about that later.

Still, as technology continues its unrelenting journey of expansion, even as the world is breaking and aching from ecological damage, a pandemic, and political fractions and factions—all accented by wars, earthquakes, fires, floods and mass murders—two schools of thought have emerged. While not strictly based on age or experience, each school of thought is deeply entrenched in one or the other of our learned generational norms. Add to that humanity’s accelerated development of the mental faculties over the last hundred years, largely without the counterbalance of the Spiritual, and that brings us towards today.

When larger than life events occur coupled with global conditions beyond belief—all escalated through chaotic arousal challenging the very foundations upon which our lives are grounded—humans are moved to reach out for help, searching for a “savior” of sorts who is perceived as having the power to break through these threats, and on whose coattails one can ride. This event adds another bubble to the idea resonance model, and that is the phenomenon of “idea locking”. See Figure 1-2.

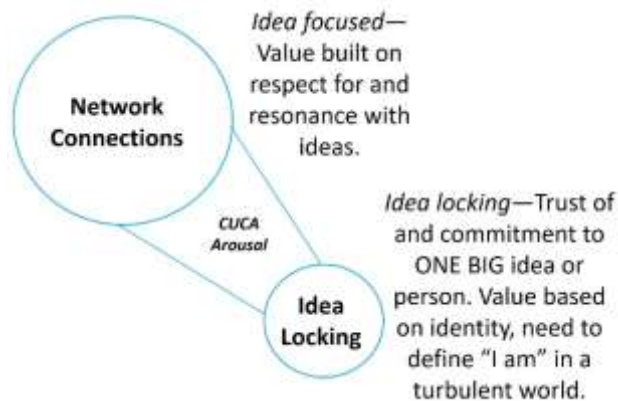


Figure 1-2. The phenomenon of Idea Locking

An important element that supports Idea Locking is arousal. The brain has been shaped through evolution to both adapt and readapt to an ever-changing world, and in so doing modifies both its chemistry and architecture. A moderate level of arousal can actually stimulate the mind and aid learning, increasing neural plasticity by increasing the production of neurotransmitters and growth hormones, which then facilitate neural connections and cortical organization. However, a high level of arousal which engages strong emotions reduces mental function and lowers consciousness, and “once emotions occur they become powerful indicators of future behavior”.⁸

Idea locking, as a fourth mode of idea resonance, has been visible for some time. In a turbulent world, it is based on the very human need to define “who I am” through connecting to something, or someone, larger than life. This might take the form of an “absolute” commitment to the dogma of a specific religion, which elevates that individual above others who do not believe. Or it might be a person’s total devotion to a particular sports team, which can escalate to moments of dangerous and damaging behaviors. However, idea locking has become highly visible and destructively engaged in the Trump era.

Trump uses the power of arousal, largely exhibiting the characteristics of his mentor, Roy Cohn, an attorney who was an aide to Senator Joseph McCarthy and criticized for ethical transgressions throughout his career, who always maintained he was a victim and embraced a strategy of counterattacking, never admitting guilt and always claiming victory in the press.⁹ Does that sound familiar? Examples of idea locking in the Trump era include the self-proclaimed “religious” groups who lock into prevention of abortion—to the point of punishing a 12-year-old rape victim aborting the fetus as a murderer—yet simultaneously supporting the death penalty and separation of children from their parents at the border. Then, there is the BIG LIE, no matter which side of the “LIE” on which you lie, the outrageous continuation of falsehoods spewed throughout the political structure. This battle continues to tear American democracy apart. How can this be happening?

Back to Trust

Perhaps part of the answer to this question lies in a deeper understanding of interpersonal trust. “Interpersonal trust is present in a situation in which one individual places his or her interests under the control of another individual, with the expectation of gaining a desired outcome for which the potential negative consequences of violated trust are greater than the value of the potential desired outcome.”¹⁰ From the viewpoint of a Trump sycophant, this says that their *perception* (belief) of *what might happen* without the desired outcome (Trump as President) has far worse consequences (socialism, destruction of democracy) than that which Trump offers. This begs us to ask: *How has this perception come into being?* Even with the chaos of arousal which reduces an individual’s depth of thought and consciousness, we humans tend to defend our beliefs and how we see the world. This defense accepts some incoming information, rejects some, and changes some to fit into our personal beliefs. When these distortions occur, incoming information no longer represents the knowledge of the sender, whether that is government, non-profits, business, or media, and therefore knowledge is not fully shared, if at all. New knowledge that contradicts or challenges what is already known

also tends to threaten an individual's concept of self, thereby creating all manner of defensive reactions that minimize or negate learning. This focus of the mind on "defending itself" does not provide time for listening or considering another person's viewpoint. So, it's not about "right" or "wrong".

The question we ask in a more academic treatment of this subject is whether this period is an aberration emerging from the arousal incited during the Trump era, and continuing into today, or is there something deeper at play here for humanity?

An in-depth research study in 2009 extensively looked at the Net Generation (or Millennials), the generation rapidly becoming the key decision-makers in today's organizations, identifying core values and characteristics from thousands of participants across the U.S.¹¹ Three identified core values were transparency, participation, and collaboration. Transparency is critical to establishing trusting, long-term relations. Participation was demonstrated by Millennials reaching out worldwide to creatively engage people and ideas, including community service and political engagement. They expressed a concern over economic inequalities, and a strong belief in government. Collaboration, as expressed by Net Geners (a slang for Millennials), is achieving something *with* other people, experiencing power *through* other people, not by ordering a gaggle of followers to do your bidding. As forwarded, the Millennials are now moving into positions of authority both in and out of government. While Baby Boomers still tightly hold to the higher seat of power in the government, these are, and will continue to, give way to Millennials and their progressive ideas.

Moving beyond our beliefs, it is time for humanity to shift from a Culture of Connection to a Culture of Coherence, a "clarity of thought, speech and emotional composure" which leads to "wholeness and global order, where the whole is greater than the sum of its individual parts".¹² How can we bring this coherence into the whole? We live in a world in flux and are literally in the midst of a consciousness shift "fueled by the pandemic, intertwined with the global and the individual pursuit for truth, and searching for governance that can be trusted to move humanity toward a better world",¹³ a world reflecting coherence, wholeness.

Perhaps this new generation offers us the opportunity to do so. It is with these thoughts in my head, that I remember Arnold's words inserted when we began this conversation, that culture has a purging effect on the human mind. See Figure 1-3.

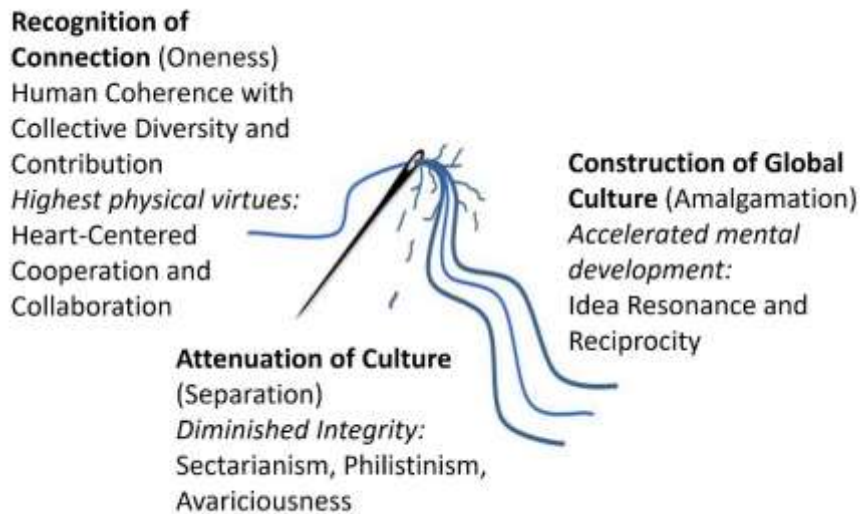


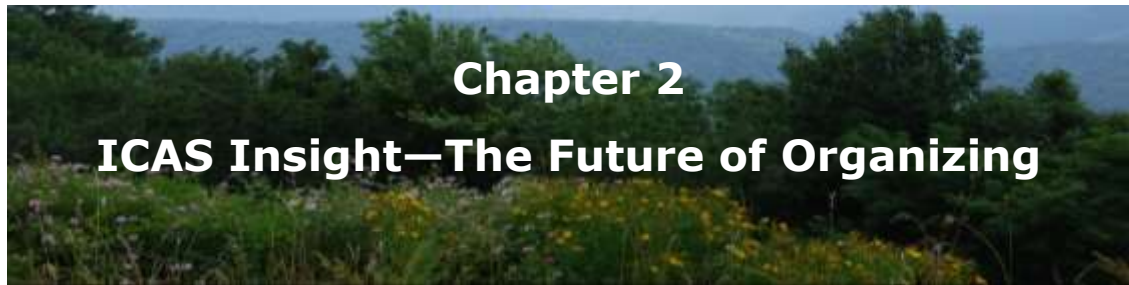
Figure 1-3. The consciousness shift underway is separating the chaff from the wheat

From science—and in continuing research underway by HeartMath—we understand that when coherence in one system is coupled to other systems, it “can pull the other systems into increased synchronization and more efficient function”.¹⁴ Perhaps unknowingly, we’ve been building a new system of humanity, the Millennials, who are not afraid to engage their hearts and minds at the personal, community and global levels. This Net Generation truly has the potential to create a global Culture of Coherence.

So, we here at Mountain Quest continue dreaming. Older, yes, but still with the good sense to send our thoughts into the ether and help dream the future into reality.



The Mountain Quest Inn and Retreat Center



While they've always been with us, in today's world *forces are building*. A force occurs when one source of energy affects (pushes against, interferes with, or influences) another source of energy, whether with positive or negative results. Energy can never be lost—it can only be transformed—and it is through this transformation that light, heat, electricity, and Life are produced! Things in the natural setting of our planet that are not sentient are controlled by the *forces of nature*.

And forces bring change. As we've come to say, the world is CUCA! (We told you we'd come back to this term!) That first big **C** represents change. Well, you say, there's always been change. Yep, that's true, only today it's taking leaps and bounds in every area of life—the *pace of change has changed*. And along with that change, there is so much **Uncertainty**, even down to the point of survival. Where will my next rent or mortgage payment come from? And the chatter continues: Life, liberty, and happiness. I'm entitled. If I wear a mask, it takes away my freedom; besides which, they are uncomfortable. If I don't wear a mask, it may take away someone's life, or maybe even my own, that is, if this whole bunch of fake news is anywhere close to reality! Life is illusion anyway, so it's only illusion that's going to die.

Guess it's easy to tell that the second **C** in CUCA stands for complexity. Our systems continue to increase in complexity, whether small or large—medical care, water supply, power grids, the Internet, distribution, politics, the economy—and the more they increase in complexity, the more vulnerable to failure, either from natural causes or from intentional sabotage. Why? First, as systems become more complex, they have more internal connections and networks, making them more susceptible to possible failures. Secondly, these same complex systems are, or can easily become unpredictable because they no longer operate via deterministic cause and effect. While each connection may, or may not, be causal, the number of connections, the possible feedback loops (or sneak circuits), the time delays and nonlinear effects, plus the possibility of sensitivity to input values and the effect of their own environment all create a situation of non-predictability. And the **A** represents the anxiety we all feel in response to the CUC part. So, how do our organizations survive in such an environment?

Alex: The conversation began—as so many did—after a 15-hour work day when we finally arrived home to a good soak in the jacuzzi. I had a dilemma. Tomorrow I was scheduled to speak at a monthly event sponsored by Knowledge Management Consortium International (KMCI). As the Chief Knowledge Officer of the U.S. Department of the Navy (DON), I'd spent the last year traveling around the country, and indeed the world, sharing theory, approaches and examples underlying the many DON successes in Knowledge Management (KM). The DON knew that it couldn't move forward separate from its many international partners.

While as long as I can remember I'd wanted to travel around the world, after a year or so this often proved exhausting, especially when speaking two times a week at two different geographical locations! What helped keep my energy and KM passion high was a simple promise made to myself that every time I spoke there would be two new slides in my pack (death by PowerPoint had not yet become a battle cry). Actually, creating PowerPoint slides helped me pull together my thoughts, sort of like connecting the dots, an organizational tool forcing a close look at the relationships among things.

On the other side of the jacuzzi, David was quietly sitting in a state of reflection.

Also in silence, I was remembering. In the DON, when Information Technology (IT) first took a large part of the budget, the “real” engineers were up in arms. Yet within a few years, many of those engineers became quite attached to IT, but were again upset when a large portion of the IT budget was refocused on Information Management (IM). “Ah, come on! You can get your hands around technology, and that can change the world! But IM is soft.” Eventually, of course, IT was outsourced and IM became primary. With this history, it wasn't surprising that the same uproar occurred when KM moved into the picture, even though the KM budget didn't usurp the IM budget but rather piggybacked on it. Still, the heads nodded, punctuated with soft laughs. “KM? That's soft. Information is real, but knowledge, that's something you can't get your hands around.” Frankly, it was also difficult to get our heads around.

Well, we *did* learn you couldn't order it to happen! I remember a meeting with the U.S. Army Chief of Staff who wanted to know why the Navy was having more success in KM than the Army. As he explained their approach to implementation, he said quite emphatically: “I don't understand why it's not happening. I ordered it to happen.” That clearly doesn't work with something that's, well, about people. For us to change, to be *willing* to change past beliefs and behavior, we first need to be *aware* (attention) of the new situation (reality) and *believe* that it is true. But that's not enough to change, we need to *understand* (knowledge) what the change means and *feel* (emotion) good about changing. But still not enough. With all that in hand, we need to take personal *ownership* (it's my responsibility to do) and *empower ourselves* (through knowledge of *what* to do and the *courage* to do it), knowing that our new actions are worthwhile and will make a difference. We use the first-letter mnemonic AUBFOE to remember all of that.

David was humming a bit now, his favorite melody (and mine, even long before we met), *Amazing Grace*. Both of us hummed that when in deep thought. What’s next, AFTER KM, I asked him. “Has to be a response to complexity”, he responded. I loved systems and complexity and was in the middle of a PhD in human and organizational systems. I answered, “Well ... we’re complex adaptive systems.” And he said, “As are our organizations, and hopefully, *intelligent* complex adaptive systems.” And there it was. **Our organizations as intelligent complex adaptive systems.** It was the late 90’s, and in that moment ICAS was born. We spent several hours tossing ideas back and forth. First, we characterized the current environment: Connectivity (the Internet was just emerging), DINK (data, information, knowledge), access, speed, and digitization.

We talked for a while about how, historically, man has always sought a stable and predictable environment, and it was during these times that civilizations and societies advanced. Yet the world was CUCA, and that required building in the ability for our organizations to adapt, just as the human body and mind can adapt, in order to overcome environmental threats and take advantage of opportunities. So, what would that look like? See Figure 2-1.

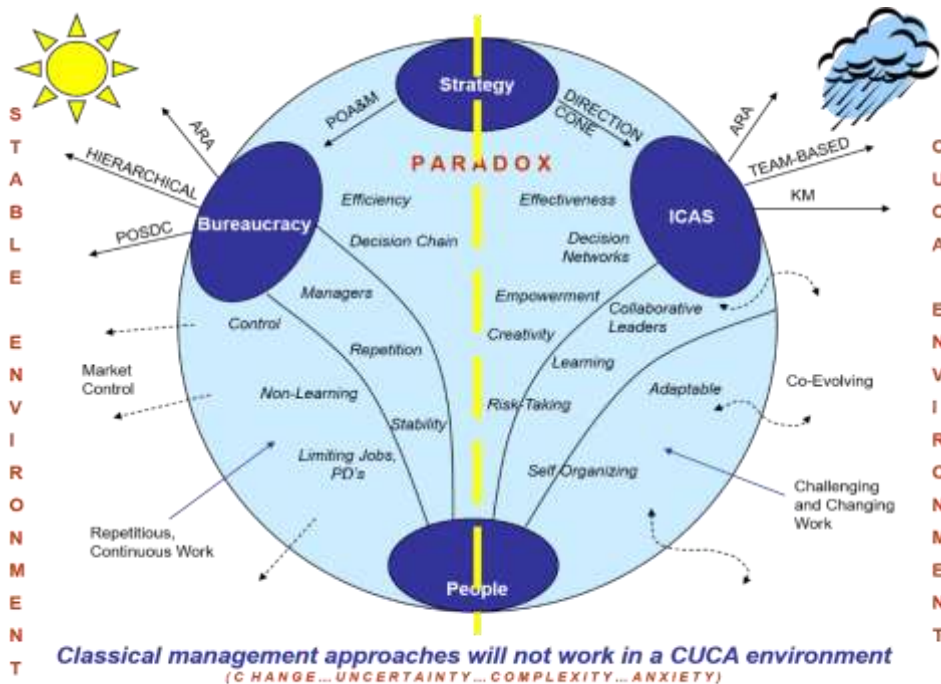


Figure 2-1. So, what would an intelligent complex adaptive organization look like?

Before the night was out, we had identified eight emergent characteristics that needed to occur in an ICAS organization. These are (1) organizational intelligence, (2) unity and shared purpose, (3) optimum complexity, (4) selectivity, (5) knowledge

centricity, (6) flow, including both the flow of information and knowledge, and in terms of the optimal human experience or autotelic work¹⁵, (7) permeable boundaries, and (8) multidimensionality, including instincts and automatic competencies that are natural and become second nature. While it was a long night, there was enough time to build two slides, which I added to the end of my presentation in the mode of *what's next*.

The First ICAS Presentation

It went quite well. After the presentation three men walked up to the podium, one who I recognized as the coordinator of the event. After thanking me, they pushed on the ICAS idea. Thank goodness for our in-depth conversation the previous night! Still, I only had one additional level of depth in terms of pre-thought for this conversation; but it didn't seem to matter since the ideas were new to these men as well. With a driver waiting and as I began to excuse myself (thankfully), the coordinator mentioned that KMCI published a quarterly journal, and would I please submit an article on ICAS for their next publication. I asked for the submission date (some six weeks hence), agreed, and took his card.

David and I worked together, and once we began to write, it just didn't stop. A very long article was submitted, which was later to become the first two chapters of a book, *Organizational Survival in the New World: The Intelligent Complex Adaptive System*, published by Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann. Then, we kept writing, and a second paper emerged. What strategy, structure, culture and overall health level would permit our organizations to act intelligently? A strategy to achieve dynamic balance and the correlation of forces that drive organizational performance: direction, intent, knowledge and knowing. A learning organization with collaborative leadership and an action culture. A knowledge-centric organization with permeable and porous boundaries. And when the paper was written, that follow-on second paper was published the following quarter in the same journal. And, amazingly, when we looked at that second journal, EVERY PAPER THAT WAS IN IT WAS IN RESPONSE TO, OR EXPANDED UPON, the ICAS introductory paper published the previous quarter!

It wasn't long before KMCI and Elsevier asked us to write the ICAS book. We had already purchased the 450-acre farm at that point. David had sold his company, I had resigned my position with the U.S. Navy, and we were packing up preparing to move. The plan was to keep our home in Vienna for a year or so while I settled into the old farmhouse with our two wonderful Akitas, Sashi and Kumo, and the building of the retreat center began.

We had discovered a local woman who was happy to come in and clean the old farmhouse once a week. Her daughter was getting married the first week of June and planning to move into their new home for their honeymoon. Then the unexpected

happened. The new home was broken into and considerable damage done such that they couldn't stay there and would now have to spend their first week of married life with her mother. What a wonderful opportunity this was for us! We believe that energy affects its surroundings, even to the point of being able to “feel” or “sense” the energy of people who have experienced strong emotions in a place. And there is no happier energy than newly-weds in love! So, we put a hold for a week on our building start date, set the farmhouse up in a welcoming way with a bottle of champaign, fresh new robes, flowers and several small gifts to build memories, and I moved back to Vienna for the week.

The Book Emerges

My youngest son, who had just finished completing a degree in culinary arts, agreed to join us in this magical venture, and he jumped in to run pretty much everything so we could push the ICAS book out. Still, we went out mornings to help feed the horses—we had several by then. We would walk across the fields below the rolling mountains, most mornings feeling the tingle of a soft breeze, the emerging light catching the sparkle of soft dew on the evening's spider webs along the fences. We didn't realize at the time we were grounding. Holding hands, and often wearing matching shirts, we would share our plans for the day as we passed through the shadow of the mountains into the side door of the farmhouse. Writing the ICAS book took three months. Three months to integrate the learnings of two workplace lives (emerging from 60-70 years of experience) and fully develop the ICAS concept. And then it was done. In three months.

We believe that **when the time has come for some idea to emerge in humanity, that it comes forth in many places in many different ways**. Thought is in the air, and when we prepare ourselves mentally in a domain of knowledge, then focus on something, we attract similar thoughts, which emerge in our minds. Later we would call this the process of associative attracting. As an interesting example, about a year after the ICAS book was published, we received an email from a man who lived in Europe; I think Germany. He was actually quite upset with our ICAS book because he had been working on a similar book for several years, then had seen ours, which had been out already a year (and written two years earlier ... publishing at that time was very slow). I wrote him back and asked the knowledge domain of his work. He said he was in manufacturing, so all his models and examples were drawn from and connected to that field. “Good!” I responded, and went on to say how validating and wonderful it was that we were both expanding the literature on these ideas, that there was a great need for them to be approached through the language of different domains with different examples, and that he was free to use any of our ideas in his text.

This is the way the world works. I get a kick out of people wanting “ownership” of names and ideas. No one owns knowledge, and the more we give it away the more it expands both inside and outside of “us”. In that way, it's somewhat like love. Not to say

that knowledge can't cause negative results! Since knowledge is *the capacity to take effective action now or in the future*, it's personal (context-sensitive and situation-dependent) and has value in terms of how effectively the actors predict the results of their actions! Knowledge has no "value" in terms of, well, values, you know, those things that are worthy and desirable to make us better people, sort of guidelines for living. Knowledge can be used for good purposes or bad purposes. It is the way knowledge is used that determines its "value" to the user, or to humanity at large!

When we're kids our parents direct our lives ... they spend hours and years telling us what to do and how to do it, many of them demonstrating the desired behavior (or not, and spending more hours and years telling us why it's good for us but not for them). And they hope and pray—as we hope and pray when we have our own children, and grandchildren—that they have embedded the right sets of thoughts and behaviors, the right values, to help us live well and have "success" when we enter the world of adults, if there is such a thing.

Truth be told, values are emergent phenomena. Funny thing, this characteristic of emergence. Twenty years ago the word was out there, but it really didn't mean a darn thing to the masses, and even less to businesses. The big, "soft" word in business was culture (which is also an emergent phenomenon). The reason is that we were still living blindly in a cause-and-effect world, where we honestly believed that certain behaviors and actions would cause certain results. How many times have you heard someone say, "Focus on results, we need results!" In the DON metrics were REALLY important. And how important have metrics been in the organizations in which you've worked? How much did you yourself rely on measures to prove the value of your performance, of that next raise, of that promotion? Don't feel bad. We've all been living in that same world. It wasn't until a decade or two ago that experts started talking about *measuring for the future*. That meant measuring *desired* behaviors instead of what we were currently doing that we *thought* would produce desired behaviors. Subtle difference ... big, big difference!

So back to **emergence**. This word (and the concept it represents) helps provide us a way of thinking beyond cause-and-effect relationships. Something that emerges comes from the interactions of many different things, moving beyond the sum of those things and producing something different. And what emerges doesn't just come from those things, but the interactions and relationships *among* those things in a particular context. The "funny" part of this is that if you can't trace it back to a single cause (or even multiple causes), then how do you make it happen? This is getting important now. Because the answer is you don't "make it happen".

First of all, the "make" part misses the mark. You cannot control emergence. You can, however, nurture the environment, as we learned 20 plus years ago from case studies on innovation in the Apple Computer think tank. You can put a structure and processes

in place that support the people who will help make “it” happen. You can express a desired end state and direction for your organization to move and share this understanding across the organization. So yes, you can, in fact, focus on instilling qualities in the workplace, and consequently the workforce, that provide the opportunity for “it” to happen. And then, no matter how sure you are that you’re on the right track, the “it” may or may not be exactly what you planned or expected. Even worse, you might order some strain of “it” into being and end up with “it” not being what you want or need at all! Why? Because people are complex systems, and should be complex *adaptive* systems, and hopefully *intelligent* complex adaptive systems, only most organizations have lots of all three types.

Gosh, we started just wanting to talk about values as emergent phenomena and now we’ve got to take a look at these complex systems, complex adaptive systems, and intelligent complex adaptive systems. What is the world coming to? Okay, let’s make it quick. Complex systems are complex systems. Woops! Too quick ... can’t define a thing by itself (that’s another rule from somewhere). Okay, complexity is a condition of a situation or organization (system) that is *integrated in some way* but has too many parts and relationships to understand in a *simple way*. Think about an ant colony, or, from personal experience before the pandemic, 5 PM Friday night on the Los Angeles Freeway System! Add the word adaptive and you get the behavior of that motorist who sees the roadblock ahead and creates a new route for himself and his passengers. Add the word intelligent and you get the driver who stays at work until the thick of it clears.

So, the adaptive driver studies and analyzes his environment and—from the middle of the thick of it—acts to influence his external environment and his relationship with that external environment. The intelligent driver took advantage of his understanding of the environment to adapt his working hours around the logjam, what might be termed as recognizing the environmental opportunity space and weaving his relationship with the external environment such that he takes advantage of space and time. Or maybe the intelligent person comes up with the idea to set up a virtual business. Or maybe another intelligent worker decided to start her own business in the suburbs. Or maybe one worker decides to both live and work in the city within walking distance or one or two stops on the subway! Or ... but you get the idea. There are lots of different ways to act intelligently, and an amazing diversity among people. The hard part is figuring out the best way for *you* to act intelligently in a particular situation (context), while simultaneously staying flexible and adaptable to your environment. And how do you do that as an organization?

Underlying all those decisions and behaviors are your values. Do you enjoy living in the city? How many hours do you need to spend at work—whether face-to-face or virtual—and how much time do you need to focus on your family and friends? Do you want to have your own business, or leave the headaches (and rewards) to someone else? How do you set your priorities? Value and values ... what is *of value* (to you at a

particular time and in a particular situation) and *your values* themselves, which are emergent phenomena you've spent your whole life emerging!

Since strong values tied to words like morality, virtue and integrity are sorely needed to successfully move us through this current reality, let's explore this concept further. If I asked you for a core value or belief, what is the first thing that would come to mind? Most of us can think of one or two things immediately, things that we've given some thought to or are basic to our culture and work ethic. In the past, that included things like honesty and integrity, or justice, or respect and tolerance. Pretty good values, certainly. I explored this question in a study based on world-wide interviews with 34 thought leaders in the KM field.¹⁶ Pretty much all of them came up quickly with the first response of a core value, but then the second core value was harder to pull up, usually with hesitation, and if a third came along there was an even longer thought time involved, several times popping up much later in the interview.

This is not because we don't have core values. That sentence had a double negative. Another way of saying it is: *We all have core values*. But we don't just sit around and think of them. They emerge (come to mind) when needed, and are the result of, among other things, our country, neighborhood, parents, experiences, education, families and friends, work, and our failures and successes ... and, the amounts of all these of one nature or another, and the interactions and relationships among them, and the particular time, situation and expectation. Whew! Now, if I have a decision to make, or I'm in a situation where I need to act, my response is driven by my basic beliefs and values, called to the surface (or not)—called to action based on how they pertain to a certain situation at a particular time. So, I may have different values that are pertinent to different situations at different times, i.e., not necessarily a specific value that carries all the way through.

My favorite example of this was the title of a sermon I heard one Sunday at the Hollywood Methodist Church in, yes, Hollywood, California. Spent a year living off of Hollywood Blvd. in my much younger days and was a soloist at the Hollywood Methodist Church. The title of that sermon was, "There's sin in sincerity". The example provided was of an older member of the congregation who wore an absolutely obnoxious hat to church, and who was so excited with her new hat, and felt so good about it, that she couldn't help but call it out to friends and acquaintances, "Don't you just love my new hat?" How would you respond to her? If you think you'd tell her the truth, let's add a bit more weight to that response.

Let's say she's poor and has lost most of the members of her family, and church is the only family she has. Still going to tell her the truth? Or maybe just skirt around it? Only, she insists on your response, of course, because you are her friend, and she is feeling quite beautiful today. Still going to say it's awful? If so, let's add more fuel to the fire. How about if you know she's dying, and that this new hat is most likely a last burst of

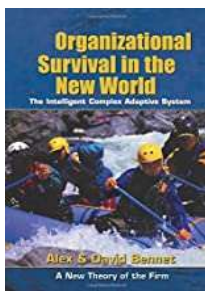
joy for her. You get the picture? Your response is not black and white; there are all sorts of colors of gray. And anyone that tells you otherwise is not looking beyond their box, their frame of reference.

A more serious example, and one that continues to haunt mankind. You believe in life, the value of life, yet what do you do if you are threatened by a murderer with a gun? Okay, turn the other cheek (you're dead, now). But, next life, your child is being attacked. Or, how about a room full of children? How about a school full of children? Conversely, how about the ecological rape of the world that's underway today? Where do you draw the line? So, values emerge as a result of the relationships and interactions of many things (using the word "things" not just to mean material things, but as a term *de arte* to include feelings and thoughts), and they for the most part are culture dependent, situation dependent, time dependent and *you* dependent. And your values emerge from the "you" that is a complex system ... perhaps a complex adaptive system ... and just maybe, an intelligent complex adaptive system.

As you can see, the ICAS was far more than an organization text. The concept cried out for the authors to become fully involved, fully engaging their thoughts, feelings, beliefs and values. And this was only a first step into the Quantum entanglement that was opening its doors to possible futures. Our reality—illusion anchored by self-delusion—was cracking open right along with the breakdown of ecological, cultural, economic, political and personal systems.



Related published work:



***Organizational Survival in the New World:
The Intelligent Complex Adaptive System***

by Alex Bennet and David Bennet

In this book Alex and David Bennet combine their years of experience to propose a new model of the firm that enables organizations to react more quickly and fluidly to today's fast-changing, dynamic business environment. The Intelligent Complex Adaptive System (ICAS), based on research in complexity and neuroscience e—and incorporating networking theory and knowledge management—turns the living system metaphor into a reality for organizations.

Organizational Survival in the New World is filled with new ideas married to practical advice—all embedded within a thorough description of the new organization in terms of structure, culture, strategy, leadership, knowledge workers and integrative competencies. The Bennets combine theory and practice in a new vision of the organization to empower leaders, managers and professionals who must excel in the age of complexity.

“Alex and David Bennet are ideally suited to bring forth such a wide-ranging and erudite synthesis of complexity and knowledge theories. A fascinating report from the front-lines of the new thinking about how organizations thrive (or fail to).” – Larry Prusak, Distinguished Scholar in Residence, Babson College, author of *Working Knowledge* (co-authored with Tom Davenport).

“If you want to know the latest thinking about organizations all fits together to provide a roadmap for the future, you will want to read this book. It is provocative and original.” – Dorothy A. Leonard, Harvard Business School, author of *Wellsprings of Knowledge*.



***Knowledge Mobilization in the Social Sciences and Humanities:
Moving from Research to Action***

by Alex Bennet and David Bennet. *With:* Katherine Fafard, Marc Fonda, Ted Lomond, Laurent Messier and Nicole Vaugeois. *In cooperation with:* The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC)

This book takes the reader from the University lab to the playgrounds of communities. It shows how to integrate, move and use knowledge, an action journey within an identified action space that is called knowledge mobilization. Whether knowledge is mobilized through an individual, organization, community or nation, it becomes a powerful asset creating a synergy and focus that brings for the best of action and values. Individuals and teams who can envision, feel, create and apply this power are the true leaders of tomorrow. When we can mobilize knowledge for the greater good, humanity will have left the information age and entered the age of knowledge, ultimately leading to compassion and—hopefully—wisdom.

“In the decisive quest for global environmental and social balance, ignorance—in the form of intolerance, superstition, dogmatism and self-denial patterns—is the worst liability, and knowledge mobilization—in the form of transparency, public awareness, community action, social innovation and international reorganization—the best asset. Major landmarks in human history may well be described as transcendent knowledge mobilizations. Perhaps the most transcendent knowledge mobilization so far, and the first of a global scale, is required right now.” – Francisco Javier Carrillo, Professor of Knowledge Systems and Chairman of The World Capital Institute

“Knowledge Mobilization is a powerful methodology that can unlock the hidden value creation potential of a community for an organization. This book is essential for all communities and organizations that want to increase their competitiveness in an effective and sustainable way.” – Milton Correia de Sousa, Sociedade Portuguesa de Inovação

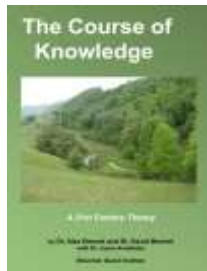


***Decision-Making in The New Reality:
Complexity, Knowledge and Knowing***

by Alex Bennet and David Bennet.

We live in a world that offers many possible futures. The ever-expanding complexity of information and knowledge provide many choices for decision-makers, and we are all making decisions every single day! As the problems and messes of the world become more complex, our decision consequences are more and more difficult to anticipate, and our decision-making processes must change to keep up with this world complexification. This book takes a consilience approach to explore decision-making in *The New Reality*, fully engaging systems and complexity theory, knowledge research, and recent neuroscience findings. It also presents methodologies for decision-makers to tap into their unconscious, accessing tacit knowledge resources and increasingly relying on the sense of knowing that is available to each of us.

Almost every day new energies are erupting around the world: new thoughts, new feelings, new knowing, all contributing to new situations that require new decisions and actions from each and every one of us. Indeed, with the rise of the Net Generation and social media, a global consciousness may well be emerging. As individuals and organizations, we are realizing that there are larger resources available to us, and that, as complex adaptive systems linked to a flowing fount of knowing, we can bring these resources to bear to achieve our ever-expanding vision of the future. Are we up to the challenge?



***The Course of Knowledge:
A 21st Century Theory***

by Alex Bennet and David Bennet with Joyce Avedisian

Knowledge is at the core of what it is to be human, the substance which informs our thoughts and determines the course of our actions. Our growing focus on, and understanding of, knowledge and its consequent actions is changing our relationship with the world.

Because **knowledge determines the quality of every single decision we make**, it is critical to learn about and understand what knowledge is. **From a 21st century viewpoint**, we explore a theory of knowledge that is both pragmatic and biological. Pragmatic in that it is based on taking effective action, and biological because it is created by humans via patterns of neuronal connections in the mind/brain.

As humanity moves toward intelligent activity, **knowledge, incomplete and imperfect, is the currency of our journey**. The better our understanding of this human capacity, the greater the opportunity for making good choices. We begin by laying the foundation with clear definitions of information and knowledge, and levels and types of knowledge, then enter the realms of the voiced and unvoiced, delving into the dimensions of knowledge (explicit, implicit and tacit), engaging tacit knowledge and living through context. From a neuroscience perspective, we explore the magnificent mind/brain, social knowledge and the fallacy of knowledge reuse. Finally, we look at knowledge as values, moving from knowledge to wisdom, the relationship of knowledge and knowing, and sub-personalities as knowledge.

*We are in a continuous cycle of knowledge creation such that every moment offers the opportunity for the emergence of new and exciting ideas, all waiting to be put in service to an interconnected world. Learn more about this **exciting human capacity!***



***Leading with the Future in Mind
Knowledge and Emergent Leadership***

by Alex Bennet and David Bennet with John Lewis

A *tour de force* for the Future of Leadership. We exist in a new reality, a global world where the individuated power of the mind/brain offers possibilities beyond our imagination. It is within this framework that thought leading emerges, and when married to our collaborative nature, makes the impossible an everyday occurrence. *Leading with the Future in Mind*, building on profound insights unleashed by recent findings in neuroscience, provides a new view that converges leadership, knowledge and learning for individual and organizational advancement.

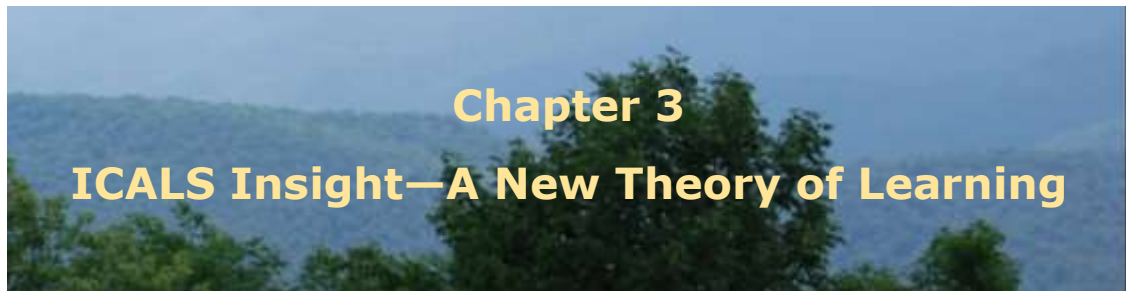
This book provides a research-based *tour de force* for the future of leadership. Moving from the leadership of the past, for the few at the top, using authority as the explanation, we now find leadership emerging from all levels of the organization, with knowledge as the explanation. The future will be owned by the organizations that understand and can master the relationships between knowledge and leadership. Being familiar with the role of a knowledge worker is not the same as understanding the role of a knowledge leader. As the key ingredient, collaboration is much more than "getting along"; it embraces and engages.

Knowledge and leadership, a quality of organizations, have always been in relationship. However, the significant mental growth emerging throughout the 20th century—where individuals at all levels began to expand their capacity to learn—and the expansion of the capacity for social knowledge in the interconnected world of the 21st century has propelled humanity into a new age. Knowledge—and the responsibility for how that knowledge is used—sits squarely on the shoulders of leadership at all levels.

The nature of the organization has moved beyond the factory and process metaphor and is now understood as an intelligent complex adaptive system (ICAS). *Leading with the Future in Mind* covers the essentials of working, learning, and leading in an ICAS, covering knowledge and complexity, but also passion and spiritual energy. As social creatures living in an entangled world, our brains are linked together. We are in continuous interaction with those around us, and the brain is continuously changing in response. Wrapped in the mantle of collaborative leadership and engaging our full resources—physical, mental, emotional and spiritual—we open the door to possibilities. We are dreaming the future together.



As the world expanded, so, too, did the Mountain Quest library.



David: Engaging with Alex pre- and post-marriage, I’ve been actively involved in research in the areas of knowledge and knowledge management for well over a decade. My awareness of the importance of knowledge, and hence also of creating knowledge and just exactly what was happening in the mind/brain, grew as I discussed organizational and knowledge issues with individuals and organizations around the world. This experience led me to the following two assumptions: Complexity will continue to grow and, as a result, there will be an increasing need for knowledge. By knowledge, much like Plato’s “justified true belief”, we mean *the capacity to take effective action under varied and uncertain circumstances*, which means knowledge is applied information. As I write this, Alex and I have co-authored numerous books and papers focused on organizational adaptation and the role of knowledge in helping individuals and communities deal with the challenges of a changing, uncertain, and complex world, some of which you read about in the previous chapter.

Reflecting on the role of information, maybe it was synchronicity that I discovered theoretical biologist Tom Stonier’s body of work, a three-volume study of the role of information in the structure of the Universe. Stonier proposed that “organization is the physical expression of a system containing information”.¹⁷ Organization means the existence of a non-random pattern of particles and energy fields, or more generally, the sub-units comprising any system. That means that in the material world organization can be observed in space and time as a physical phenomenon and information is a basic property of the Universe—as fundamental as matter and energy.

The technology-supported information explosion set the stage for two hypotheses (no longer assumptions): (a) world complexity is increasing and, (b) because of this, the continuous creation and application of knowledge is essential for the future welfare of the planet. No argument with either of those! And because complex systems can rarely be understood by analytical thinking or deductive reasoning, *the deep knowledge created from effortful practice and development of intuition and tacit knowledge through experience and continuous learning is required*.¹⁸

These observations—coupled with many years of teaching and working in the government and private industry—made it clear that successful professionals must be continuous learners throughout their lives if they are to keep up with the changes and increasingly complex demands placed on organizations, communities, and nations. In this context, I take learning to mean *the creation and application of knowledge*. Knowledge is developed through learning, experience, and practice that results in the understanding of the *how* and *why* a system or situation behaves the way it does. Thus, knowledge includes meaning, understanding, insight, creativity, judgment and the anticipation of the outcome of actions.

Love of Learning

My love of learning emerged at the age of 14 when I first discovered Einstein and Infeld's book, *The Evolution of Physics* (1950). While my subsequent education in electronics, nuclear physics, and mathematics built an appreciation of the sciences, and in particular physics, ten years of teaching nuclear physics led to an increasing recognition of the value and challenges of adult learning. This appreciation expanded further during six years of futures research as I delved into liberal arts, human development and human and organizational systems, realizing the need for wider knowledge in an unpredictable environment where one must think flexibly and prepare for a range of possibilities. *The challenges posed by uncertainty and complexity mandate continuous learning.*

While various forms of “teaching and education” have been around for centuries, until recently the state-of-the-art of adult learning was primarily based on cognitive psychology and educational theories developed from the behaviorist approach of observation, and experiments that measure behavior and infer the learning that results from that behavior. While this yielded considerable knowledge about learning, it was an outside-in, black box approach that provided little understanding of the what, why, and how that goes on inside the mind/brain. Little wonder! Prior to the 1980s there was not much information and knowledge available about how the mind/brain learns.

As the new century emerged, that was no longer the case! Advances in computer technology and measurement techniques accelerated research in, interest about, and public awareness of the importance and potential of neuroscience and related fields to provide a science-based understanding of how the individual mind/brain/body learns. This is when we first heard about functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), the electroencephalograph (EEG), and transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS). With these new capabilities—and having always been fascinated by how the mind works as an integrated biological and complex system—I was drawn to the challenge of investigating the intersection of neuroscience and adult learning to see if emerging discoveries in

neuroscience could contribute to our understanding and implementation of experiential learning. I believe that it is humans that separate knowledge into different domains, not nature. As I look out the large etched window from the top of the old farmhouse we now call home, with the green fields stretching out toward the gray-green mountains that appear an arms-reach away, my belief takes on expanded meaning. There is no separation, but rather a flowing connectedness.

It is easy to resonate with E. O. Wilson's work on consilience,¹⁹ the bringing together of two or more disciplines, or when two or more inductions drawn from different disciplines come into agreement. Sort of reminds me of Alex and my relationship; we nearly always come to a place of agreement. While she's on the computer more often than not, I hear her now rummaging around downstairs in the kitchen with our dear friends Bob and Jane Turner, who visit often and always come bearing gifts! Jane is a connoisseur of yard-sale shopping; just what is needed when building a retreat center! Bob worked with Alex at the DON, coming over for six months from his permanent position with the Federal Aviation Administration to participate as a part of the leading KM implementation team in the Federal sector.

Hmmm. Taking a system's perspective, limitations and challenging problems often derive from our inability to rise above the tendency to categorize and specialize in separate disciplines. While disciplines are convenient, artificial constructions that may be effective within their boundaries, they may also be limited by their frame of reference and accepted procedures and practices. Of course, this can happen within a discipline as well as across disciplines. Yet, by looking across fields it may be possible to see interactions and possibilities that are not obvious within individual disciplines. Howard Gardner²⁰ calls this synthesis, what he considers the ability to knit together information from disparate sources into a coherent whole, and thinks this is the kind of mind that will be at a premium this century! It promotes coherence.

Help Along the Path

I was committed to this learning. I had promised myself and Alex. Little did I know it would take ten years! Which was a wonderful ten years that wound up building the foundation for over 40 books! Alex was there, moving through the Ph.D. process with me. While her PhD was in human and organizational systems (and was finished long before mine), her science background was shallow. She was eager to learn, and her questions caused me to dig deeply and explain foundational concepts in both physics and neuroscience, as well as connecting the emerging learning. Amazingly, Alex would often jump to a new idea without explanation of the old, such that in our conversations I would wind up telling her WHY she was right! What fun! Now, as I begin to have a glimmer of understanding about the Quantum field, the wonderful field of consciousness of which

we are all a part, I've recognized Alex's ability to connect with that field and attract ideas. But that's another story. Perhaps later in this book.

My friend Bob Turner became a strong voice in this research. He continuously searched for—and found—new books and articles in neuroscience, scanning them before recommending them. Throughout that ten years, he and Jane were at Mountain Quest often, and Bob always arrived with a new idea, a new book, or having created a model based on our previous conversations. And our conversations would go on for hours! What a joy it was to have two amazing co-partners in this massive research project!

The PhD was long over when the book, *Expanding the Self: The Intelligent Complex Adaptive Learning System*, became a reality. The nine assumptions this work is built upon are in Appendix A. Ten years of research surfaced 13 areas of neuroscience findings critical to adult experiential learning. These can be divided into three groups. The first grouping is made up of the unconscious, memory and emotion, and represents a foundation that is always involved in learning. The second group represents findings that influence learning in specific situations. It includes stress, creativity, mirror neurons, anticipating the future and social support. The third group is related to the capacity for, and enhancement of, lifelong learning. This group is made up of social interaction, epigenetics, plasticity, physical and mental exercise, and aging.

From this work emerged an expanded theory of adult experiential learning. See Figure 3-1. The four boxes circled around Self represent David Kolb's original four modes of experiential learning.²¹ Although the sequence appears clean, it was recognized by Kolb that as learning occurs a learner experiences many direct connections between and among all of these modes. The larger circle moves from *Active Experimentation* to *Social Engagement* to *Reflective Observation*, with a direct interactive link with *Concrete Experience*. This brings the importance of social learning into the experiential learning model. Further, while Kolb recognized the influence of the environment on internal learning, the environment is actively engaged in the learning process. At the top level of the model, the addition of *Self* as an underlying foundation and acknowledgement of the role of the environment in the learning process—and adding *Social Engagement* (including both social interaction and social support) as a fifth model of learning—fully reflects the Bennet findings.²² The fifth mode of social engagement brings in the process of associative patterning, which supports all five modes from the viewpoint of Self.

The distinction of self is an important aspect of the ICALS expanded experiential learning model. At the highest level, self represents the perception of separation, with boundaries encompassing a set of physical, mental, emotional and spiritual characteristics and beliefs. Self is a learned pattern and, while the understanding of self

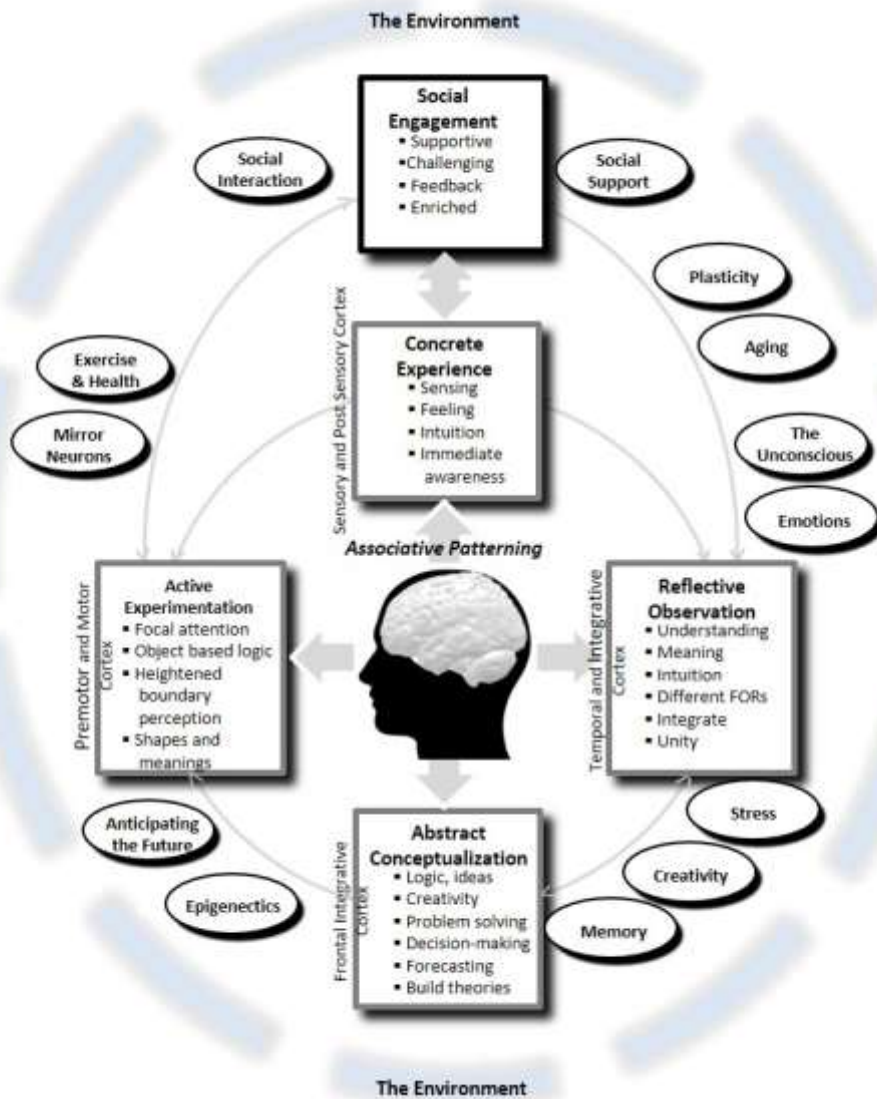


Figure 3-1. The Intelligent Complex Adaptive Learning System

in a “self-world” distinction has shifted, nonetheless there has been considerable development through the years of the “I-as-subject” concept. For example, the substantive self-consciousness thesis considers the self as a persisting object with self-consciousness, the recognition of self as an object. The self and the environment are co-perceived, that is, our perception of self co-evolves with the perception of the environment as we move from infancy into adulthood.²³ This awareness of self as a persisting object (the substantive self-consciousness thesis) supports connecting the self to the physical body and the perceived boundaries of the body as separate from our

environment and other “self’s” within that environment, although it does not explain whether the self as an object is a mental or physical self.

As one object in a world of perceived objects, we can now consider the relationship between subject and object (bringing in the “I-as-Subject” Thesis, with “I” as the self-conscious subject of thought (me), which includes experiences producing knowledge that help build the idea of self). From the viewpoint of associative patterning, we would say that interactions in the environment have provided incoming information that, when complexed with internal information, produced new patterns of thoughts and feelings. These patterns—part of a continuous information stream—produce our ever-changing internal map of self and the world within which we live. In the mind/brain, a network of neurons mimics the structure of the body parts to which they belong and literally map the body, creating a virtual surrogate of it, what Damasio²⁴ refers to as a neural double. In brief, neurons are about the body, and this “aboutness”, this relentless pointing to the body, is the defining trait of neurons, neuronal circuits, and brains. When the body interacts with its environment, changes occur in the body’s sensory organs, such as the eyes, ears, and skin; the mind/brain maps those changes, and thus the world outside the body indirectly acquires some form of representation within the brain.²⁵

Along with a lot of research, a lot of modeling, and a high volume of writing, nine guidelines for learners emerged, offering a high-level perspective for adult learners as they acquire and apply knowledge and consider implementing their own self-development. These guidelines are concerned with (1) the infinite potential of the human mind, (2) the powerful role of beliefs, (3) the influence of the environment, (4) the responsibility of knowledge, (5) the power of the unconscious, (6) the wisdom of age [need to reread that one!], (7) the drive for certainty, (8) the sacredness of values, and (9) the paradox of life. These are shared in Appendix B.

As we finally brought this work into being—transforming it from the inner depths of our souls, the findings of scientists who were charging ahead of the crowd, and the screaming needs of a CUCA world—I genuinely enjoyed a sigh of relief before realizing that there was still so much more to do, so much more to learn.

Consilience is said to broaden one’s perspective—and so it may. But it also confuses, challenges, and creates more questions than answers. Questions! The bane of my life! Meaning and knowledge are uphill, icy roads that strain every step, yet lead to a beautiful vision—if only we can get there. I welcome those to come and thank all past and present researchers who travel these slippery and exciting roads with us. Wherever we end up, we are better for the effort, and perhaps so is the world. And so, hand-in-hand, we continue walking the fields and engaging our keyboards, staying the course on the journey we had begun.

Related published work:



***Expanding the Self: The Intelligent Complex Adaptive Learning System (ICALS)
A New Theory of Adult Learning***

by David Bennet, Alex Bennet and Robert Turner

We live in unprecedented times; indeed, turbulent times that can arguably be defined as ushering humanity into a new Golden Age, offering the opportunity to embrace new ways of learning and living in a globally and collaboratively entangled connectedness. In this shifting and dynamic environment, life demands accelerated cycles of learning experiences. Fortunately, we as a humanity have begun to look within ourselves to better understand the way our mind/brain operates, the amazing qualities of the body that power our thoughts and feelings, and the reciprocal loops as those thoughts and feelings change our physical structure. This emerging knowledge begs us to relook and rethink what we know about learning, providing a new starting point to expand toward the future.

This book is a treasure for those interested in how recent findings in neuroscience impact learning. The result of this work is an expanded experiential learning model, the Intelligent Complex Adaptive Learning System, which adds a fifth mode of Social Engagement to Kolb's concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation, with the five modes undergirded by the power of Self in an ever-shifting environment. A significant conclusion is that, should they desire, *adults have much more control over their learning than they may realize.*



The library became a source of research and a place of reflection.

Chapter 4

Expanding to the Existential Experiential

Alex: There is so much we have learned about the mind/brain since advances in brain measurement instrumentation and excitation technologies at the turn of the century accelerated research in, interest about, and public awareness of, the importance and potential of neuroscience. And thanks to David's devotion to this work for ten years, and maybe Bob's and my commitment to supporting him, every day brought with it new learning! We increasingly recognized that humans are holistic beings, and that the mind is an integrated, biological and complex part of the human system. And as we moved into a Quantum frame of reference, recognizing that energy and matter are indefinite and that thought affects energy,²¹ we realized more and more that the limitations and boundaries we each create close us off from fields of possibilities.

Simultaneous with the neuroscience research—consistent with our dedication to a consilience research approach, and the recognition that humans exist on the physical/etheric, emotional/astral, mental/manasic planes with strong connections to the Spiritual—we asked: Do human characteristics that are spiritual in nature contribute to the learning process? And that became a research project. To explore the answer to this question, we adopted the following approach: (1) carefully define our terms and the intent of those terms; (2) utilize a variety of disciplines as resources to investigate the nature of spirituality in terms of human characteristics; (3) surface the assumptions underlying our engagement with this question; (4) provide a baseline discussion of ways of learning; and (5) map the themes emerging from identified spiritual characteristics to the leaning process.

Spiritual Learning

Note that our focus was *on* spirituality as it contributes to learning, not the learning *of* spirituality, although there was inevitably some overlap. Excitingly, we discovered several small collections of published work on spiritual learning, which proved highly

supportive of this approach. So, we set about this research, which helped clarify our own thoughts and provided a foundation for our future work. The first step, definitions.

Spiritual is taken to mean *pertaining to the soul*, or “standing in relationship to another based on matters of the soul”.²² That meant we had to define soul. Soul represents *the animating principle of human life in terms of thought and action*, specifically focused on its moral aspects, the emotional part of human nature, and higher development of the mental faculties. From the philosophical aspect, it is *the vital, sensitive or rational principle in human beings*.²³ Our own conviction that this was in service to “others” was confirmed by one of our favorite researchers, Csikszentmihalyi, who says that “an enduring vision in both work and life derives its power from soul—the energy a person or organization devotes to purposes beyond itself.”²⁶

We also noted that an alternative definition of spiritual is *of or pertaining to the intellect* (intellectual, the capacity for knowledge and understanding, the ability to think abstractly or profoundly)²⁷ and *of the mind* (in terms of highly refined, sensitive and not concerned with material things).²⁸ Thus, our working definition of spirituality is *the elevation of the mind as related to intellect and matters of the soul reflected in thought and action*.

Since the definition of knowledge is *the capacity (potential or actual) to take effective action*, learning is considered *an increase in the capacity for effective action*. Thus, **spiritual learning is defined as the process of elevating the mind as related to intellect and matters of the soul to increase the capacity for effective thought and action**. We got there!

Various learning models were applied during the research process, including exploring the three types of learning: (1) Type 1, developing skills which requires learning and practicing new ways of doing something; (2) Type 2, developing knowledge in a field (single loop learning), which requires studying and practice better ways of taking actions, developing new processes, tools and methods, and applying new management idea; and (3) Type 3, changing the basic theory and belief about how a system works (double loop learning). The domain of spiritual learning resides largely in Type 3 in that spiritual growth undoubtedly affects or expands frames of reference more traditionally associated with bureaucratic-oriented businesses and government environments. Spiritual learning also moves beyond double-loop learning to what might be described as Type 4 learning, that which has been called intuition, or the “ah ha!” experience, or what might be attributed in spiritual literature to unconscious streaming or channeling. More recently, as we delved into understanding the workings of the mind in terms of associative patterning and associative attracting, we would describe this as the ability to connect with (and tap into) the larger consciousness field or Quantum field

(which in our belief set is the God field). Whatever the source, Type 4 learning emerges unconsciously as a form of knowing, with insights often taking the form of transformative knowledge.

The Mountain Quest library—with extensive research texts on learning, and which includes Alex’s expanded collection of publications in a myriad of topics related to spirituality—provided the opportunity to engage deeply in this research. When we came up for air, we saw that the human learning characteristics spiritual in nature, that is, characteristics that were developed both in the learning literature and the spiritual literature, could be grouped into five general themes:

SHIFTING FRAMES OF REFERENCE: Abundance, awareness, caring, compassion, connectedness, empathy, openness.

ANIMATING FOR LEARNING: Aliveness, grace, harmony, joy, love, presence, wonder.

ENRICHING RELATIONSHIPS: Authenticity, consistency, morality, respect, tolerance, values.

PRIMING FOR LEARNING: Awareness, eagerness, expectancy, openness, presence, sensitivity, unfoldment, willingness.

MOVING TOWARD WISDOM: Caring, connectedness, love, morality, respect, service.

In our model, spiritual capital was considered as both an amount²⁹ (in terms of subject/object feelings and feeling activities) and an internal state-of-being (in terms of a condition, nature, or essence), or a quality. Considering capital in terms of stock, spiritual capital represents an individual (or organization, country or world) investment in the process of spiritual growth. In its entangled learning role with human and social capital, spiritual capital expands the individual’s threshold of awareness, the functioning space within which knowledge and events make sense.³⁰

In 2008 we published the resultant paper: “The Knowledge and Knowing of Spiritual Learning”.³¹ In this study, we discovered a clear positive correlation between representative spiritual characteristics and human learning. This makes sense, of course, since there are overarching connections between the concepts of spirituality and learning that are embedded by virtue of the concepts themselves. For example, as the Dali Lama

described, “Being spiritual suggests a personal commitment to a process of inner development that engages us in our totality The spiritual person is committed to growth as an essential ongoing life goal.”³² In other words, learning (growth) is a life goal of spirituality. Therefore, it follows that human characteristics spiritual in nature would contribute to learning. And since every complex adaptive system that survives is learning, *there are innate characteristics within each individual, whether latent or active, which are spiritual in nature.*

The Brain/Heart-Mind/Soul Continuum

As we continued down the learning road emerging from neuroscience findings, we began to realize that there was a Brain/Heart-Mind/Soul continuum which is all about learning and expansion. The *brain* is the physical structure that hosts our thoughts, that molecular structure floating inside our skull, with fluids flowing within and throughout. The *mind* is the patterns created by neuronal firings and their connections, not only in the brain but throughout the body, encompassing all of our thoughts! And our brain contains somewhere around 10 billion neuron cells, with each neuron connected to about 10,000 other neurons through synapses or small gaps through which neurotransmitters can flow.

While we tend to think of the brain as the seat of control—and it certainly plays a continuous role in the process of thought—it’s the body-heart-mind that acts as an information network with no fixed hierarchy.³³ Neurons exist throughout the body! They are in the spinal cord, the heart, the peripheral nervous system and the gut. While these are largely focused on autonomic functions such as breathing, all of these neurons provide sensory feedback to the brain, which affects emotions. The heart is very much at the center of this activity, with its powerful magnetic field radiating beyond the body, carrying information that affects the environment and others in the environment, and communicating with the brain and the body in four ways: neurological communication through the nervous system, biochemical communication through hormones, biophysical communication through pulse waves, and energetic communication through electromagnetic fields.³⁴ That means that the heart, mind, brain and body are all part of our experiential learning system, with continuously changing patterns. And as we interact with life, our neuronal circuitry is continuously rewiring itself, breaking and recreating relationships with other neurons through the process of plasticity.

The soul, as we had learned, represents the animating principle of human life in terms of thought and action, specifically focused on its moral aspects, the emotional part of

human nature, and higher development of the mental faculties, which is the vital, sensitive or rational principle in human beings. See Figure 4-1.

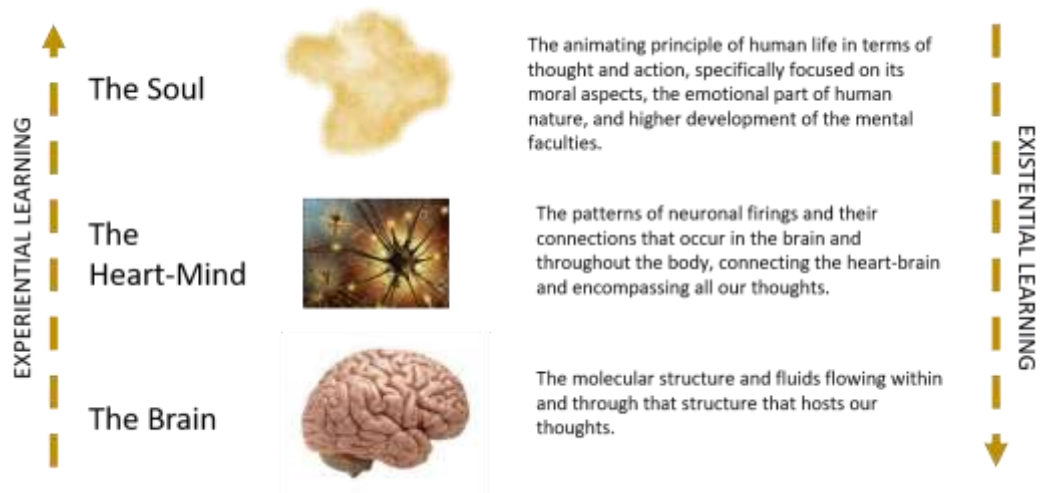


Figure 4-1. *The Brain/Heart-Mind/Soul Continuum*

In this figure, the soul is represented by a conceptual thought form, which is similar to the thought form to represent vague intellectual pleasure, that is, to know and understand.³⁵ We're not saying that one leads to the other, rather a collection working together to achieve growth and expansion, each with a different role to play in learning that learning. However, there is a *focus* in terms of the origin of that learning. Experiential learning is focused from the viewpoint of the material physical reality, while Existential learning—which suggests the use of the term “existential” beyond the physical limits of historical usage—is focused *from the viewpoint of the soul*, that is, from the higher mental faculties, which have access to an individual's experiential learning in the material world, as well as an understanding of the emotional and moral development of an individual.

The human journey of *experiential learning in the physical/etheric body* is one of acting, reacting, then synthesizing, with each new action building on all of the acting-reacting-synthesizing cycles that have come before. We build upon previous learning. Synthesizing is both simplification and explanation, as well as the ability to create a *coherent whole* from various pieces or things. The ability to decide what information to heed, what can be ignored, and how to organize and communicate what we think is important is a core competency for everyone alive today. See Figure 4-2.

Synthesis is at play in our everyday life as we tie our life together into a *coherent story*, a concept of self. Moving through a variety of experiences, the individual singles

out and accentuates what is significant and connects these events to historic events to create a narrative unit, what could be described as a *fictionalized history*. As Long forwards “The person makes choices about the importance of persons and events, decides on their meanings ... [which are] neither a lie nor ‘the truth’, but instead a work of imagination, evaluation and memory.”³⁶

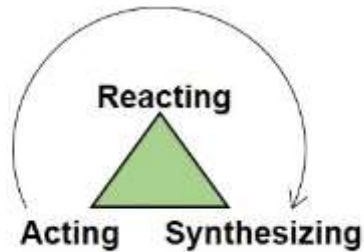


Figure 4-2. The human journey of experiential learning

The Collision of the Experiential and Existential

The existential learning process from the viewpoint of the soul—relating to the development and expansion of thought and action in terms of morality, emotions and the higher mental faculties—is at the pinnacle of all that has been experienced and learned in the acting-reacting-synthesizing cycle. As we know, energy conserves itself. There is never any waste, merely transitions. While action is no longer a focal point in the existential state, all of the patterns created during the acting-reacting-synthesizing cycle remain. Nothing of value is wasted.

Focused at the physical/etheric level, the concept of existentialism that emerged with 19th and 20th century philosophers put the individual at the center of reality. Everything was subjective, and the meaning of life created by each individual is all that existed. The universe is unfathomable, and each individual must assume ultimate responsibility for acts of free will without any certain knowledge of what is right or wrong or good or bad.³⁷ Hmmm. We certainly agree that the universe IS unfathomable from our individual point of view, yet we also recognize that there are patterns that play themselves out in nature at various levels of focus. For example, all the mineral substances that are part of the earth’s crust can be described by the Platonic solids, five shapes that each have equal faces, lines and angles. These are the tetrahedron (4 triangles), the cube (6 squares), the octahedron (8 triangles), the dodecahedron (12 pentagons) and the icosahedron (20 triangles). These five simple shapes are a template for all three-dimensional forms in the Universe.

By recognizing that patterns repeat themselves throughout nature, we can imagine a “being” cycle at the soul level based on thought versus action, howbeit thought no longer bounded by the limitations imposed by the physical connections of the mind/brain. While patterns created during the acting-reacting-synthesizing cycle serve as the foundation of the soul’s existential state of being-reflecting-planning, as we’ve discovered, these are indeed patterns, which are not exact replicas, that is, blow-by-blow details of events and experiences. See Figure 4-3.

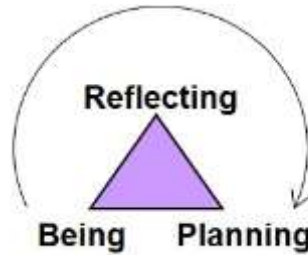


Figure 4-3. The human soul existential state of being-reflecting-planning

Planning is forethought—a mental activity focused on achieving a specific goal. When we expand consciousness, we expand our ability to see patterns and to develop good predictive success, and help others do the same. Thus planning, related to forecasting and predicting the future, brings the three parts of time together (past-present-future) and is an interactive part of consciousness. As a property of intelligent activity,³⁸ planning always has a purpose, and includes formulating, evaluating, selecting and sequencing thoughts to move toward a desired goal. From the instant those thoughts regarding what is planned emerge, we are on the path of creation.

We offer now a new direction for the concept of existentialism, no longer tethering the concept to the physical body at the lower end of the brain/heart-mind/soul continuum, but rather to the *divine nature of the individual human soul* at the higher end of that continuum. The term “divine” refers to perfect or godlike. Recall that the soul represents the animating principle of human life in terms of thought and action, specifically focused on its *moral aspects*, the *emotional part of human nature*, and *higher development of the mental faculties* and, philosophically, it is the vital, sensitive or *rational principle in human beings*. From this viewpoint, you exist, you still exist, you always exist as an individuated expression. Yet this concept of existentialism is in *full relationship with concrete human experience*, starting with the authentic thinking, acting, feeling individual who has freedom in terms of free will, or choice, and the learning and expansion that result from that choice. *It is an existential “experience”*.

In the existential state, the soul is the orchestrator, although the invariant forms of memory that the soul has access to are those that are the most important to the individual. This means that the wheat and the chaff have already been separated, with, once learning has occurred, the negative and painful details—which no doubt contributed significantly to our learning—no longer of importance, and therefore not part of the higher mental faculties, the soul. While the human body is meant to move, the heart is always “sensing” and the human mind/brain is quite active, with “monkey chatter” filling up moments in between purposeful thought, there are instants when we as humans have the opportunity to “experience” the existential state. For example, during meditation, or in the instant of a sneeze when it is said that all bodily functions pause. Perhaps another hint of what is possible in the existential state is the transcendent state of beauty.

Besant and Leadbeater recognize the beauty of thinking and thought. They focus on the thinker as clothed by subtle matter of the mental plane. As they describe:

The mental body is an object of great beauty, the delicacy and rapid motion of its particles giving it an aspect of living iridescent light, and this beauty becomes an extraordinarily radiant and entrancing loveliness as the intellect becomes more highly evolved and is employed chiefly on pure and sublime topics.³⁹

This description appears to be analogous with the higher mental faculties that represent the soul. This thought – what is referred to as *a living entity of intense activity* – is vibrational in nature. As Besant and Leadbeater point out:

Every thought gives rise to a set of correlated vibrations in the matter of this body, accompanied with a marvelous play of color, like that in the spray of a waterfall as the sunlight strikes it, raised to the n^{th} degree of color and vivid delicacy. The body under this impulse throws off a vibrating portion of itself, shaped by the nature of the vibrations – as figures are made by sand on a disk vibrating to a musical note – and this gathers from the surrounding atmosphere matter like itself in fineness from the elemental essence of the mental world.⁴⁰

And during this “experience” of thought, there is nothing else. ALL the senses, ALL the energies, are fully focused on the “now” during this **existential experience**. And, it is possible for this existential experience to be part of our life learning now. This is one of Alex’s personal experiences:⁴¹

A few weeks ago, I was working in a support role with a large internationally renowned orchestra. My job was to make sure everyone had the sheet music they needed, run errands for the Maestro, and generally handle the small emergencies that regularly occur when you bring together nearly 60 professional musicians! How I enjoyed my work! During rehearsals I had a folding chair right behind the Maestro. And, over the

years, many of these musicians had become personal friends. Just imagine being right in the middle of things as the orchestra recorded Mahler's and Tchaikovsky's symphonies. But it was the operas that tugged at my heart. I've heard it said that the first time someone attends the opera they either love it or hate it. For me, it was definitely the former.

The Maestro was well-respected, a recipient of the National Medal of Arts from the President, and the Gold Baton from the American Symphony Orchestra League. Little wonder that the owner of the theatre was sitting in the front row stage right grinning, thoroughly enjoying the rehearsal. The focus on this particular occasion was Bizet's *Carmen*; the last hour had been spent reviewing a few hot spots throughout the score. Now, the Maestro wiped his brow, stuck the red handkerchief in his pocket, and announced "No. 1. The Prelude." There was a slight scuffing of chairs, rattling of paper and a soft swish as bows were renewed.

By way of context, all the detail provided above is more of a knowing that all this was happening. And now, the essence of the experience.

The Maestro turned his head to give me a wink, smiled at the theatre owner, then, turning back to me, handed me the baton and said, "Take them through this. I'll be right back." And he was gone, heading out the back of stage right.

From the edge of my eye, I see the owner's mouth hanging open. But I hop right up on the rostrum and raise my arm. I glance quickly at the music. *Allegro giocoso fortissimo*. The slight smile I know is on my face expands. What fun! 2/4 time. I set the tempo with two beats and we are off and playing. Perfect staccatos. Four measures in, a perfect trill. Repeat. Now, piano. Flow, staccato, flow, staccato ... *Pianissimo, crescendo molto*. My body bounces, softly, with the rhythm, tears move down my face, coming from I know not where since I'm immersed in pure joy. I KNOW this music. I FEEL this music. And near the end we move into 3/4 time *Andante moderato*, expressive movement weaving note-into-note-into-note, building to a final chord that is *staccato fortississimo!*

My body is shaking while simultaneously rooted in place. *Pausa lunga*. The Maestro is behind me, smiling. And then I woke up in my bed here at Mountain Quest, eyes wide open, still filled with all the joy and fullness and majesty of the experience.

How could this be? How could an experience so real happen? I began to flick back through my life experiences. Yes, I knew and had the opportunity to work with Maurice Abravanel when he joined the Music Academy of the West for summer programs. Yes, I've sung in the chorus in *Carmen* productions and studied the role of Micaela, so there is no doubt that at some point I've watched and heard an orchestra play the Prelude to *Carmen*. Yes, I've conducted choral groups, small bands and small string groups, and even the 7th Fleet Band in Yokosuka once, so the feel of conducting is familiar. STILL,

I've never conducted a large orchestra, and certainly never the Prelude to Carmen! Yet, I JUST DID THAT, perfectly, accompanied by all the activity and feelings of the moment.

Our experiential and existential worlds are colliding. Perhaps it was always meant to be this way as we as a humanity move closer and closer to discovering – and more fully engaging – our higher mental faculties. We have been given hints of our continuing learning journey through such discoveries as how the brain stores memories as invariant forms so that they can be applied to future situations that are similar but not identical, or the understanding that appresentation – what is perceived as an external experience – can stimulate and expand a rich internal experience of the whole, and recognizing the phenomenon of mirror neurons, where the act of observing someone's movement activates the same brain areas activated by the movements themselves. These serve as BIG hints for the reflecting state of existential being, which, in essence, is fully “experiencing” ... only this “experiencing” is not in the acting-reacting-synthesizing cycle of experiential learning, but rather in the being-reflecting-planning state of existential learning.

In these times of a shifting humanity, there is so much more of us to discover ... if we dare!

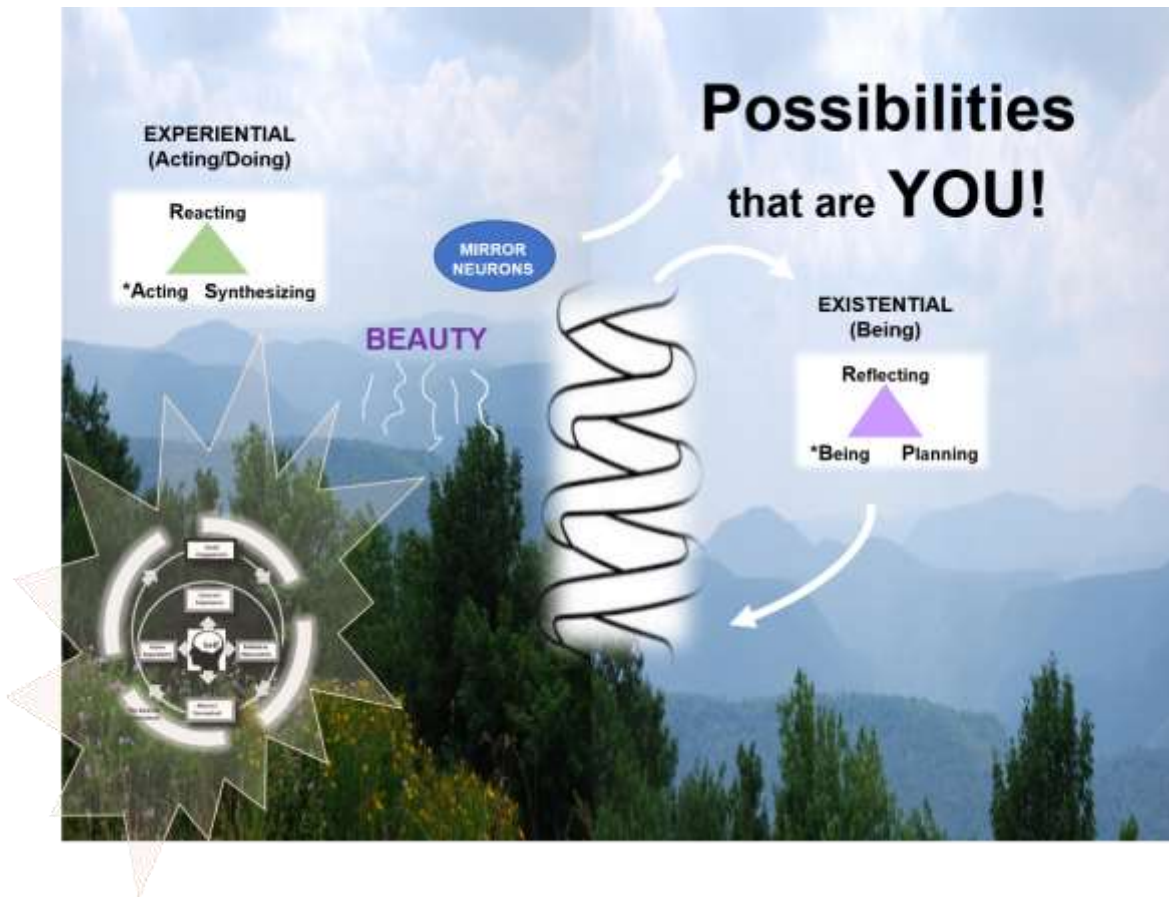
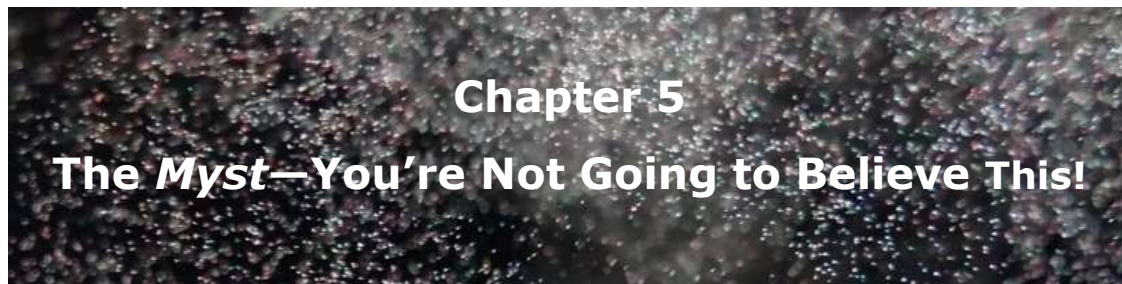


Figure 4-4. Fully engaging the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual natures of higher vibrational experiences where the mountains meet the library



The Breath of God



Chapter 5

The *Myst*—You're Not Going to Believe This!

Everything is energy and patterns of energy, as David often says, at least in the lower dimensions of our universe where we sit in the basement! Of course, matter is a densified form of energy, and we certainly recognize there's an electromagnetic field that's part of our form or we wouldn't be able to think or move or, well, live. So that's LIVING electromagnetic energy, which is harder to pick up, even by proxy, because it exists in a different dimension. The term etheric is used to describe that electromagnetic field in which we live.

Phase is the direction of a wave or particle as it moves through some part of time/space. But there ARE things that are omnidirectional. Used to be you'd point that old TV antenna one direction to pick up the signal and had to get it exactly right, but today many electromagnetic energies are amplitude modulated, sending out a wider signal. When we moved to our valley in Frost, West Virginia, near the Green Bank Telescope, we didn't think much about all of that. But pretty soon, as person after person moved through the Inn, coming to the "safe haven" near the telescope to escape the effects of expanding electromagnetic frequencies, we began to understand that the human body had limits. Various energies, higher frequencies and especially pulsed EMFs, which are much more biologically active than non-pulsed EMFs, negatively affect the human structure. This is prescient knowledge for mankind since the "smarter" technologies use pulsed EMFs.

Living phase energies are chi, which comes through the Earth and is only living when it is flowing, and prana, which comes from the sun and stays in the body to provide constancy and balance, holding the body together. Since all living things take in prana from the sun, when we eat we absorb the prana from what we are eating. If the food is old (vegetables moving toward rot) or if it is from an animal who, for example, felt fear (which sends an instant barrage of hormones and toxic substances throughout their bodies) as it was being slaughtered, then we are bringing poor or tainted prana into our bodies. Somehow, living on a farm highlights things you really didn't think much about previously!

By the summer of 2010 we were becoming more sensitive to our physical health. So, after various friends and colleagues mentioned the value of a colonoscopy as a preventive measure for cancer, David decided to have one. The procedure proceeded on a Friday without any surprises. He was in; he was out ... quick and relatively painless, sort of a “check the list” kind of thing in terms of preventative medicine.

The Miracle⁴²

Alex: It was quite a surprise when David woke me up the following Tuesday early in the morning, quite matter-of-factly reporting that he was bleeding heavily. The hospital of choice is 62 miles away from our country inn and farm; that’s about one hour and thirty minutes through winding two-lane country roads. We decided not to wait for the doctor’s office to open but to leave immediately heading towards the emergency room. To pull up that memory is as if it is happening again, now.

In the driver’s seat as the sun is rising, I weave my way through the turns and curves, around trees and cow pastures occasionally punctuated by a farmhouse. We make it about half way to the hospital. In the front passenger seat, David is experiencing considerable pressure and pain, and says he cannot hold it; he feels like he is exploding and insists I pull the car over to the side of the road. It is early in the morning, with no houses nearby; no cars; no people. I pull over. David gets out of the car and goes about 10 feet into tall grass. As a liter of blood and light-colored tissue explode out of him, he passes out and falls to the ground.

Watching from the car, I quickly jump out and run to him, shaking him, yelling at him to wake up. David is white and clammy, going into shock. I grab his arm and start pulling him up, but can’t, then reach under his shoulders and drag him toward the car. He becomes conscious for about 10 seconds as I attempt to get him in the front seat of the car. He helps. As I run around the front of the car to the driver’s seat, David pulls up on the lever to the right of the seat, releasing his seat backwards and down. His head is leaning back against the head rest as fluids start gurgling up in his throat. I am afraid he will drown in his own juices. “No!”, I yell, and reach across to pull the seat back up. As his head rises it begins to fall to the side.

I talk to David as I release the car break to move forward, “Stay with me.” But he is not able to stay conscious. His head lolls to the right; and blood is dripping onto the seat of the car. It is too much, too much blood. I see the moisture on his white face vividly. He is in shock. The hospital is 30 miles away.

I know we are at a critical life point, a juncture, a time of choice. It is that moment that all of us know is coming, yet seems to arrive unexpectedly. As I press my foot to the gas, **I scream to my guides and guardian angels with every cell in my body. I**

demand, "I need help! I need help now!" This cry is the last thing David hears before losing consciousness.

I focus on the road ahead, speeding the car up and swinging around an S curve. My only thoughts are to move, to drive toward help. Time is passing. And then, as I come out of the S curve, there, by the right side of the road in front of us, less than a mile from where David first fell, sits an ambulance, a rescue squad vehicle, and a fire engine. As I pull over, I see a tow truck to the left, with three or four men standing in a circle chatting, watching the tow truck pull an abandoned car out of a ditch.

The tableau is surreal; I cannot fathom it. Now on automatic, I pull over, throw the driver's door open, hop out, wave my hands, and scream for help. Three men race across the road and pull David out of the car onto a magically appearing gurney. Within minutes David is stabilized, and awake.

The ambulance driver leans toward me as the attendant inside the ambulance prepares David for transport. "I didn't know why we were here," he shares softly. "But now I know." He then asks, "Can you follow the ambulance?" "Yes" I respond, and, with tears rolling down my face, the race to the hospital continues.

David: Have you ever been a patient in an intensive care unit (ICU)? I have. Once for a fibrillating heart that was fixed by an easy operation (adding a pacemaker), and the second from the loss of blood that Alex just described. I was lucky—or helped by outside forces—or both. Lying in a hospital bed where you can do nothing but what you are told leads you to either rebel or succumb to patience. Without realizing it, I was trained by daily commuting in the Washington, D.C. area that given two choices: (1) to rebel and try to change the world and fail, or (2) to not to worry about what you cannot change. The latter choice is almost always the best. Simply redirect your thoughts to something more productive.

Back to the ICU. I was weak, relaxed and conscious, with nothing to do but think about things that seemed important. Clearly this experience had been a close call, but was it luck, fate or synchronicity that chose to put me in the ICU instead of underground and perhaps in the spiritual world? This was not the first time that I had a close call with a life/death outcome. As I reflect, I can remember a number of situations where if things had been a little bit different I would not be writing this story. Luck, chance, destiny, help from above—I just don't know.

What I have learned about physics is that as beautiful, valuable, and insightful as it is—from Newtonian Mechanics to Quantum Mechanics and Einstein's two ingenious relativity theories to Quantum Field theory—***there are many things in our Universe that are still incomprehensible***. Our limitations of understanding become clear when we ask questions about foundational concepts such as time, space, energy or even the meaning of our theories, experiments or actions.

All too often we form beliefs—from learning and from our experience, goals and fears, etc.—that tend to solidify in our brains and become absolutes that are “who we are” and, often subconsciously, we must defend at all costs. Where it applies, the scientific method is excellent for those phenomena. But yes, science has boundaries of its knowledge and applications. It also has limits to its understanding and methodology. It also has contradictions within its findings, and has to live, at least temporarily, with some incomprehensible results.

The challenge arises, however, when we discover aspects of our Universe that do not succumb to the methods of scientific validation, things that lie beyond the boundaries of current scientific understanding and capabilities for validation. An example is the phenomenon of meditation. How does one validate that the process and results of meditation are what the meditator says they are? One can never exactly “repeat” the results, and there can be no objectivity to the outcome. The scientific method is simply not applicable ... yet. However, as the Dalai Lama has offered: “If 10,000 monks can meditate over 3,000 years and all of them say that they get similar results, one should give these results some credibility.” As distinct from scientific truth, the Dalai Lama calls this *rational inference*.

As I lay on the hospital bed getting blood transfusions and wondering how long I would need to be here, I thought about the road not taken. I would like to stay here on planet Earth and continue to achieve what Alex and I consider our purpose for being, that is, learning, understanding, and contributing where we can to others who in turn can add to the forward march and quality of human development. I could perhaps live another 20 years, and share with others our lessons learned, our thoughts, ideas and experiences. Or perhaps I could slide quietly into the night, my atoms continuing on their 13-billion-year life history by separating and once again going out into space and wondering around until the Universe comes to its end.

Or perhaps there is a third road, a non-physical part of our world that is compatible with us yet exists under different “rules and laws” than our material world has provided. Do souls live forever? Are angels real? Are psychics really psychic? I do not know the answers to these questions, but I do know that sometimes this world demonstrates amazing things that appear impossible from a purely material viewpoint.

Perhaps the appearance of the ambulance was luck, perhaps it was a Cosmic determination, who knows? In any case, after three days of deep reflection I was able to leave the ICU. But I left with the dramatic memories of my close call floating in my awareness, and a deeper feeling of how little I knew about our world. Do you realize how many things and happenings lay right in front of us yet we have so much trouble seeing, feeling, sensing and comprehending them? The easy path invites our direction. The safest stand makes us feel good. Any new direction on “the path not taken” scares us. Perhaps the light of the unknown is so low that many of us choose the better-known,

common path that we can easily see, understand and follow. Or do we dare to grow, run risks, question the unquestionable and keep an open—but cautious and learning—mind.

Clearly the Universe recognized that both Alex and I needed time to reflect on these events. I had fallen into a Poison Oak patch, and Alex had pulled me out of the patch. As if that wasn't enough, I caught a Staph infection during those three days in ICU and Alex, who was with me sleeping in a chair beside my bed, had a spot on her left forearm. So, the next few weeks we were forced to slow down and focus on healing our bodies. And as we reflected, we repeatedly asked each other, "What just happened?"

The Monroe Institute Experience

Alex: At the end of July, I was scheduled to attend a week-long program at The Monroe Institute (TMI) situated in Faber, Virginia, along the Shenandoah Mountains. Actually, the program was *Starlines I*, an incredible exploration through the inner landscape of the mystery and majesty of energy systems throughout the Milky Way galaxy (and beyond).

For that to make sense, maybe I should talk a bit about TMI.⁴³ It is certainly an unusual place. This is the home of Hemi-Sync®, that's a registered trademark short name for hemispheric synchronization, the use of sound coupled with a binaural beat to bring both hemispheres of the brain into unison.⁴⁴ What can happen during hemispheric synchronization is a physiologically reduced state of arousal while maintaining conscious awareness, and the capacity to reach the unconscious creative state through the window of consciousness. In short, this is having your conscious mind awake/aware while you are exploring your unconscious landscape. Sound like fun? It's amazing; and for many people it really works! I'm one of those many people.

I learned about TMI while I was still working with the Department of Navy, developing models for what we called "Knowing: The Art of War 2000."⁴⁵ I never got around to exploring this stuff while working for the DON, but after I retired as Chief Knowledge Officer, culminating 20 years of government service, I headed for a week-long session at TMI. As was to become the pattern when spending a week in meditation at TMI, something wonderful and mysterious happened.

It was early 2002 and, as potential buyers, we'd been looking at a couple of horses for the farm. One new "neighbor" said he had several geldings that were quite gentle. I decided to try and ride one of them in the ring, clearly a mistake. We were definitely not in sync, and when I inadvertently tightened my right knee he lurched forward. I, on the other hand, bowed backwards over his rear end, landing firmly on my head. While David says I was only unconscious for a few minutes, then talking to him and saying I was fine, it was about 20 minutes later that I became aware of the situation at hand. One second I'm on a horse riding, the next I'm walking around the grounds looking at a new foal. I

asked David, where am I? He quickly caught me up to date on the events of which I had no memory.

My first full TMI experience (Gateway) began on Saturday, just a few days after my fall. My head was still aching, and I had pulled something in my lower back, so it was somewhat difficult to walk, and, in particular, to get up and down from a seated position. Still, I was NOT going to waste this opportunity to explore my unconscious!

At night they play some surfing sounds that have Hemi-Sync® beneath them. About half way through the night, I awoke in a fright, with the feeling that I was being pulled down into a vortex, swirling faster and faster, sinking, unable to get out. It took sheer will power to bring myself more fully awake, and then my body was wrenching. I ran to the bathroom and sat in misery for 10-15 minutes. My body felt like it was exploding with energy. As things calmed down, I returned to my bed. My roommate was awake. “Are you okay?” I didn’t know how to respond, and told her what had happened. About a half hour later I decided to try and sleep again. As I started to drift into sleep the vortex was there again; but now it was moving even faster. Down, down, down. No! No! I struggled to pull myself out of the swirling energy, to sit up. I barely made it to the bathroom, bodily fluids exploding from both ends. Now I was weeping and shaking. The only thought in my head was that I wanted to go home!

My roommate woke the counselor up (who was also a psychologist) and together they coaxed me out of the bathroom. “I’m really sick. I need to go home,” I exclaimed. The counselor was a Reiki Master as well. She could feel the energy shooting off of me. She asked if we could sit for a short time and see if we could calm the energy down. She was amazing. I could feel things begin to shift, ever so slowly, and she stayed with me for several hours, until the sun rose. Then I dressed and sat through the opening session. By then I was recovering nicely, and realized my head was no longer throbbing.

During the break a young man walked up to me and introduced himself as a Rolfer, that is, a therapist who uses a system of soft tissue manipulation. He said he noticed I was having difficulty getting up and down out of the chairs, and thought he might be able to help. I appreciatively agreed. Within 15 minutes of gentle manipulation, I felt a click and what had been a cutting pain was now a dull soreness, which diminished over the next few days. Yep, you guessed it. I stayed through the entire week, and when David picked me up, I was feeling good and walking well. Since that time I have attended many other sessions at TMI, and something surprising—and wonderful—always happens.

The TMI group agreed to try orb-ing. Orbs are dots of electromagnetic energy that we now understand represent points of consciousness. So that evening I joined the group outside in a field at the top of the mountain. In the center is a concrete platform supporting a large crystal. We decided to create a ceremony of sorts to help raise our

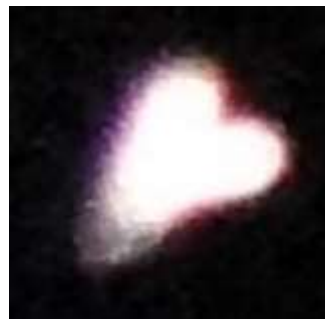
energy, joining hands and sending love around the circle, then connecting to the larger Universe before calling in the orbs. The experience was fun.

I didn't have a camera with me, but enjoyed feeling the energy and watching the others. I joined in the joyful dancing and singing to call in the orbs. They got some amazing pictures, though none as clear as the one from the previous session, the one with the face. Then, as I looked toward the dark tree line, for a split second I thought I saw a sphere about five feet in diameter, moving just above ground level. I called for someone to take a picture, but then it was gone, although a nearby photographer had some interesting light in the corner of his picture. Was it the orb I had seen, or did the light just bounce off from his fingers? I knew next time I would have my own camera for the orb pictures. This experience filled me with enough excitement and intrigue to trigger my thoughts about trying to capture orbs at Mountain Quest.

And we did! Beautiful orbs! I'd picked up a Sony Cyber-shot with a 14.1 megapixel capability and a red sensor light. When guests would see me out shooting pictures outside, they'd ask what I was doing. I'm orb-ing! And they would want their pictures taken with the orbs. Can only get them when there is joy in the air, I'd respond. So they'd crack jokes and dance and sing, and sure enough, they were surrounded by orbs! Of course, orbs were always around the animals and children. And then, one night, I began to observe intelligent behavior. I hadn't seen a red orb, so I asked for one and there it was. Then I asked for a blue one, and there it was. This was fun! And so, through the summer, I catalogued about 10,000 pictures of orbs, now able to fully differentiate them from dust particles and water molecules. We wrote a book that has a lot more detail about the orbs, and lots of pictures. But our journey had just begun.

The Joy of Orb-ing

I was now talking to the orbs or, if truth be told, singing to them as my heart became more fully involved in wonderful evening romps. When I sang and danced there were more and more orbs in my pictures, so I was sure they were listening! Then things became even *more* interesting. One night I was out with the horses shooting away. There are always orbs near animals. I wanted to get a shot of our beautiful Arabian Mystical Quest, one of the youngsters born here on the farm whom we love oh so much. Every time I came close enough to take a shot, Mystical would move toward me to get scratched and petted. The third time she started my direction I called out, "Mystical I love you, but *please* stay still!" She hesitated long enough for me to get the picture. And when I blew that picture up, there was an orb in the shape of a heart moving toward her side!





As Alex sang and danced, more and more orbs showed up in her pictures!

David: I think it was because of the possible intelligent behavior that Alex was experiencing with the orbs—juxtaposed with the fact that so many people on the Internet believed that the orbs were only a reflection of dust in front of the camera—that I became curious about what they really were. It is always easier to accept simplistic answers instead of having to study an unusual phenomenon or, worse yet, having to change one's belief system.

As Alex kept getting more and more pictures of orbs and observing more and more responsive behaviors, I began to ask myself questions about the physical conditions (temperature, wind, humidity, barometric pressure) and what, if any, were the social and emotional conditions of the photographer—or people being photographed—which might affect the chances of capturing orbs on a given night? It appears that the orbs find a more **joyful and positive environment** attractive, and—as we would expect—wind and water do affect this behavior.

Hmmm. How could the joyful, positive attitude of humans have an effect on electromagnetic spheres? What are the orbs, really? Or are we just deluding ourselves. Just because “we” get happy and feel good when we see orbs does not imply that the orbs are there *because* we are happy. I was not sure how much professional research had gone into understanding the relationship among orbs, the local environment and humans.

If there is a connecting relationship between orbs and humans, then in my rational mind it almost has to be gravitational, acoustic or electromagnetic. Of these, the electromagnetic field seems to be the most likely, and we know individuals can and do radiate and receive low levels of the electromagnetic field. We do know that each of us can sense when another person appears, feels or behaves in a happy manner. If there *does* exist an influential relationship between orbs and human happiness, can we understand it from science or from spirituality, or perhaps a combination of the two? When we move from the known to the unknown, we must be very careful not to demand that the explanations of the unknowns be similar to the explanations we have learned that explain the knowns of our current knowledge.

Alex had taken a large number of orb pictures ranging from single orbs to dozens in the same picture. When observed closely, many of the orbs had faces in them, most often taking the appearance of animals (which certainly makes sense because we live on a farm), and came in a wide variety of colors. It is difficult to see how a dust particle could reflect such a range of colors. It is also difficult to perceive seeing only one particle of dust in front of a camera since dust usually comes with many, many particles moving around together. Further, why would they be in one picture, and then not in the next, and then mysteriously appear again several pictures later?



The orbs flew through the snow ... what a sight!

Becoming increasingly interested in this borderline phenomenon between science and spirituality, I reviewed other web articles and several books on orbs and orbing. It's unusual for me to read materials on the Internet, since I'm admittedly of the old school in terms of research. Still, there seem to be two camps. Many web articles on orbs were certain that they were caused by dust particles or camera malfunctions. It was the old yes-no, right-wrong, good-bad, either-or type of thinking that blocks learning but simplifies the complexity of the world and reduces our fear of the unknown by simply believing it does not exist.

The Gift of the *Myst*

On October 4, 2010, the night was quite dark. A few stars were peeking into the blackness that surrounded Alex as she stepped carefully down the two steps of the front porch and the short brick walk to the driveway. There was a soft meow to the right. Clearly Cat Walker, her feral friend, had either calculated or sensed her arrival time. As Alex leaned over and picked up the heavy cat, she caught the soft smell of hay and felt his still-warm fur. On cool nights he slept in the hayloft. Alex wondered how he did it. He always knew just the right time to arrive at the front walk for his nightly hug. And as Cat Walker headed her way, he was trailing orbs.

With the cat snuggled against her chest, Alex walked a short way down the drive, singing quietly, then clicked her first picture of the night. There was a small green orb showing bright against a backdrop of orange, yellow, red and some still-green leaves. Later she would note the dark rings within the green orb, and the faint shape of two eyes, two ears and the long nose of a dog, an orb that often appeared in her pictures and which she perceived as a representation of her precious Sashi, an Akita who had passed the previous January.

Talking to herself, mostly through lilting melodies, she sang: "Orbs of light, beautiful energies of the night, show yourself for me tonight." While the tones stopped, the words continued in a conversational tone: "My friends of light, I need more. My husband David is a skeptic [in repeating this story later this word would be changed to "scientist" since David prefers not to be called a "skeptic"] and, well, I just need more evidence of your intelligence. Could you perhaps shape an animal for me to capture in my picture?" Laughing, she swung around toward the Llama pen and took a photograph of Pixar, a white Llama sitting peacefully on the ground.

Smiling, Alex quickly looked at the screen, then caught her breath as the camera clicked back into photo mode. Had she really seen what she thought she had? She pulled her glove off and pressed the access button, waiting, waiting, waiting. Then the photo was there, hundreds of connected orbs gracefully arching above the sitting Pixar.

“David!” She banged through the front door and quickly navigated the stairs to their living rooms at the top of the old farmhouse. David sat in his office reading. “Look at this!”

They moved together into Alex’s office, with Alex diving into the seat in front of the computer and quickly uploading to the larger computer screen the photograph she had just taken. They both stood mesmerized. Alex slowly enlarged an area over to the right that appeared a bit brighter. Faces? Yep, the sense of two eyes in spheres and soft marks that expressed other features. Were they making this up? But there it was on the computer, with clear, distinct lines mimicking the lines of Pixar sitting on the ground below. She wanted more.

It was October 6, 2010, two days after the orbs formed and shaped a huge llama above the Mountain Quest llama, Pixar. Alex decided to do her meditation before going outside that evening. The meditation Alex repeated every evening before going to bed had emerged over the course of ten years, and no matter how she felt or how tired she was, she made sure to move through this meditation. Alex would not go to bed until it was done. She guessed meditating every night was part of that responsibility thing she felt, and, yes, meditating DID make her feel better. In this evening ritual Alex would release any negative stuff that had connected itself to her during the day, fill all of her bodies with love and light, and surround herself with light. When she finished this process, she always felt a sense of well-being—safe and filled with love, and happy. And since the orbs were always there right away when Alex felt happy, it just made sense to go out orbiting AFTER she completed her meditation. At least she decided to try it out.

When she finally went out with her camera, Alex was calmer than the previous night, floating with contentment and happiness, although this was seasoned with a bit of anticipation. Her first shot was a picture of several hundred orbs towering about 40 feet reaching from the small garden in front of the Inn. While faded because of the distance and blackness of the night, in the picture there were lots of orbs visibly rising above the fountain. In the second shot, approximately 4.5 seconds later, the orbs moved toward her, covering perhaps half the distance, and now rose only about 20 feet into the air. “This is great” Alex thought, smiling.

In the light of the flash from her third shot, approximately 4.5 seconds later, Alex saw with her eyes a pink apparition looming about 15 feet above her and about 7 feet off to the left. The figure’s pink face was bony, and it looked like there was a mirror image of the face coming off from the back of the head. The torso could have been that of a barrel-chested skeleton, only it was pink, like the head, not the faded white of Halloween visitors. There were no legs, just a slight blur of pink where the legs would have been, but the outline of wings protruded on both sides. Prone to imagining, Alex would have thought this figure *was* her imagination, but in the darkness of the night, the pink shape dominated the picture on her camera screen as well!

Now it's hard to say whether Alex spoke out loud or in her mind, but her question was clear: "Should I be afraid?" Instantly, something touched her left shoulder. It felt like a hand, the pressure of palm and lightness of fingers. And waves of love washed over her, through her. Sighing, accepting, happy, Alex responded, this time undoubtedly out loud, "That's good enough for me!" And she just kept on shooting pictures.

Alex: There is so much more to this story, and there are several books available with details and lots of pictures.⁴⁶ The first book on this phenomenon, *The Journey into the Myst*, expands on the story we have shared here; the second takes a look through the lens of a researcher, and what we have learned from that point of view. My relationship with the *Myst* continues today, bringing moments of joy. But there is no more questioning, no more hunger for more, more, more. Perhaps that's age showing? Or maybe just a peace, a knowing that has come along with this enduring experience, a knowing that we are fully participative in an infinite journey, and that indeed we live in a Quantum field of love.



From the scientist and the spiritualist: We live in a Quantum field of love.



“Energies of the Light, visit me tonight”



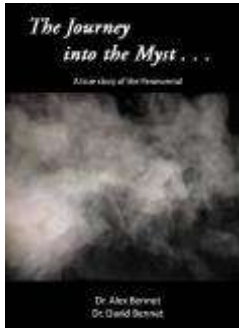


There is so much light in the Universe!



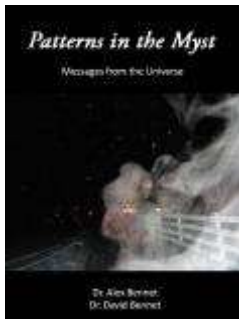
Related published work:

The Myst Series



The Journey into the Myst ... A true story of the Paranormal (Volume I)
by Alex Bennet and David Bennet

“What we are about to tell you would have been quite unbelievable to me before this journey began. It is not a story of the reality either of us has known for well over our 60 and 70 years of age, but rather, the reality of dreams and fairytales.” This is the true story of a sequence of events that happened at Mountain Quest, situated in a high valley of the Allegheny Mountains of West Virginia. **The story begins with a miracle**, expanding into the capture and cataloging of thousands of pictures of electromagnetic spheres widely known as “orbs.” **This joyous experience became an exploration into the unknown** with the emergence of what the author’s fondly call the *Myst*, the forming and shaping of non-random patterns such as human faces, angels and animals. As this phenomenon unfolds, you will discover how the Drs. Alex and David Bennet began to observe and interact with the *Myst*. This book shares the beginning of an extraordinary *Journey into the Myst*. AVAILABLE FROM AMAZON in softcover and as an eBook.



Patterns in the Myst: Messages from the Universe (Volume II)
by Alex Bennet and David Bennet

The Journey into the Myst was just the beginning for Drs. Alex and David Bennet. Volume II of the *Myst* Series brings Science into the Spiritual experience, bringing to bear what the Bennets have learned through their research and educational experiences in physics, neuroscience, human systems, knowledge management and human development. Embracing the paralogical, **patterns in the *Myst* are observed, felt, interpreted, analyzed and compared** in terms of their physical makeup, non-randomness, intelligent sources and potential implications. Along the way, the Bennets were provided amazing pictures reflecting the forming of the *Myst*. AVAILABLE FROM AMAZON in softcover and as an eBook.



The Heart, the Mind and the Myst: A Neuronal Dance with the Universe (Volume III)
by Alex Bennet and David Bennet with Sara McClain, Ronald McClain and Susan Dreiband

The Bennets shift to introspection in this third volume of the series to explore the continuing impact of the *Myst* experience on the human psyche. Joined by several co-authors, the book unfolds the experiences of a handful of people whose lives have become entangled with the *Myst* phenomenon. So many questions have come to mind over these experiential years in the *Myst*. How does this amazing experience change our beliefs and values? Do we feel and think differently? Do we act differently? What have we learned? And finally, as humanity has entered the shifting times of the 2020’s, **how has this experience prepared us for the changes underway today?** AVAILABLE FROM AMAZON in softcover.

Also, *An Infinite Story: The Unfolding of the Myst*. A Journey of Pictures and Prose by Alex Bennet. AVAILABLE FROM amazon in softcover.



A place for all seasons



We always knew that there was more for us to do with change ... despite it having been included in some way in just about every body of work we researched and published! But there was/is so much literature out there about change, and so many GOOD ideas. What could we add to that body of knowledge?

Still, periodically Alex would write an article for a journal, including the individual change model, and there was a full chapter in the ICAS text on the change agent's strategy used in the DON. And everything we would write about change would wind up in a folder on Alex's computer, waiting, waiting, waiting.

Interspersed among other travel, every year Alex would spend 2-3 weeks in Bangkok, Thailand, teaching. She had been invited to become a full professor when the Institute of Knowledge and Innovation Southeast Asia began their PhD program in Knowledge and Innovation Management. She'd had several other offers to teach both in the States and abroad, and a few of them she engaged, but not in a permanent capacity. The invitation to join the Bangkok University program brought with it warm and fuzzy memories and became the extension of an earlier commitment. Here is her story about how *The Profundity* books came into being.

Alex: While I had the lead for implementing knowledge management in the DON, I was also Co-Chair of the KM Working Group for the Federal sector—which was dedicated to fostering interagency collaboration, interagency communities of practice, and the sharing of knowledge throughout the government—and acted as an internal consultant for various organizations in the government structure as they implemented KM. This was exciting work, listening to creative ideas, standing on the side cheering (and sometimes guiding) as they were implemented, then in a position to ensure this work was recognized and honored.

So, when George Washington University became the first U.S. university to start a doctoral program in KM, I was pleased to become a part of that program as a government speaker. It was there that I first met the then-student Vincent Ribiere, who was to become the Managing Director and Co-Founder of the Institute for Knowledge and Innovation Southeast Asia. And while I certainly contributed to the learning of several years of classes moving through the program, they gave me much more. Not only did I learn a lot from the questions and challenges forwarded by various students, but the lead for the program, Michael Stankosky, proved an energetic supporter of our efforts to ensure the Federal sector took full advantage of the potential offered by KM. One afternoon he called to “chat”, definitely with an idea brewing. Didn’t take long to find out exactly what that idea was. He wondered what we could do to formalize the government commitment to KM, holding some kind of meeting/event that would bring government, educational institutions and non-profits who were focusing on KM together to explore the depth and breadth of KM in relationship to government needs. As we discussed potential approaches, it became clear that what we *could* do under the auspices of the Federal KM Working Group is bring together the leads from the seven government organizations currently committed to KM implementation—inviting the educational institutions and non-profits who had KM programs underway to join in—and, together, define a conceptual framework for KM through developing criteria for accredited government certification programs. This was a resounding success, with 14 learning objectives coming into focus. See Appendix C.

Michael Stankosky’s contribution to my learning didn’t stop there. David and I became part of the George Washington University KM push, and later a member of the International Institute for Knowledge and Innovation (IIKI), which has recently become active again. Michael went on to become the editor of *VINE: The Journal of Information and Knowledge Management Systems* for four years (maybe five ... my memory is just not as sharp as it once was), and asked me to be the Portfolio Editor for individual and organizational learning. While there was a considerable amount of work involved, it was highly satisfying. In my natural state of wanting to be of service—sometimes along life’s journey, I admit it, overreaching and overcommitting—I promised Michael that if he needed it, we would contribute an article to every volume. Among other environmental events, this timing, of course, included the economic downturn in 2008 and the consequent fallout, a time when very few business professionals and academics were focused on contributing articles to *VINE*. So, keeping to my promise, we wrote an article every quarter, doing the research, developing supportive models, and meeting the journal’s deadlines. For this, I owe Michael our deep gratitude. This set the tone for our continued research and writing which, over the years, kept us moving forward, continuously conversing and sharing our thoughts, then writing those down.

So, when Vincent called me to serve with him on the IKI-SEA teaching staff as a Professor, I finally had the opportunity to give back what had been given to me ... and my student became my boss.

The Change Books

All that by way of introducing the change books! My first attempt to dive into “a” change book was in 2015 while in Bangkok. I pulled out the change articles and notes, and started writing, and actually pulled together about 100 pages during the next week or so. Only, while it was solid, certainly, there was nothing new, nothing of that much interest, nothing exciting that would add to the field. So, as I flew back home to West Virginia, that 100 pages remained on the computer.

It was two years later that things changed for change. Again, I was in Bangkok. Those wonderful trips offered the opportunity to really focus every evening without interruption. A many-year user of the binaural beat technology, I'd spend whole afternoons or evenings meditating and exploring my inner self. It was during one of these sessions that I heard the words clearly: *It's time*. Time for what? *It's time*. As I pulled the stereo headphones off my head, I murmured “It's time” still as confused about exactly what it was time for ... but, then, the word CHANGE popped into my head, and I knew. It was time to write the change “book”.

So it began, one of the most unique experiences of my life. While certainly I had mentally prepared myself for this “book” for years, I had no outline, used no notes (until the end when I added personal examples throughout), and really had no idea as I put my hands on the keys what I was going to be writing! *Ideas just flew through my head and I just kept writing*. But perhaps one of the most fascinating experiences is that when the thoughts stopped and my fingers were still, I'd hear “Chapter 11”. So, I'd type “Chapter 11” and go about doing what we do—the everyday necessities of eating, sleeping, preparing for the next day of teaching, etc.

Thus the “book” came into being, with this process of “tapping” into the larger field and keyboarding ideas engaging a period of time nearly every day. Only, it just kept going, and always, at the end, “hearing” various chapter numbers. By the time this was completed, there were 34 chapters. I had never read any of them through, just placing each day's work based on the indicator in my head at the end of each keyboarding session. Not to say I was unaware of what was coming out on my screen; I was very aware, thinking and learning along the way such that I knew which examples from the 100 pages I'd written previously would fit where, although I didn't insert them until after

the books were written. Oh! You read that, did you? BOOKS! There are five of them! *The Profundity and Bifurcation of Change*. Part I is *Laying the Groundwork*, Part II is *Learning from the Past*, Part III is *Learning in the Present*, Part IV is *Creating the Future*, and Part V is *Living the Future*.

David became my proofreader and, well, as always, my teacher as well. On one occasion when he had just finished reading one of the books, he kept staring at me. I had told him *how* this was happening, but I think it had not registered. He asked quite bluntly, “How did you write this ... you didn’t know this?” So, we talked and talked about what was happening, and this time he listened intently.

This knowing was not an isolated experience. We had a continuous flow of people through the Inn and Retreat Center with amazing events occurring, but then, that’s for another book, perhaps. Many people would ask questions about our research, and we were always willing to share. And many people would share their problems and issues, whether as an individual or as a worker in, or owner of, an organization. As I engaged with these people, a continuous flow of information was immediately available as I spoke, small details about the individual with whom I was speaking. This woman just lost a child. This man has cancer. This person needs to write a book. So many different details, each guiding the conversation, perhaps opening the door to ask a question that needed to be asked ... for all the answers to our questions are within us, if we just allow ourselves to listen.

The Books

Back to *The Profundity* books—having already heard the title, *The Profundity and Bifurcation of Change*. It was seven months into the change project, when I was getting ready to read the books for the first time, that I was dialoging with my friend and colleague in Australia, Arthur Shelly, telling him about the project. He was going to be in an event, I think in New York, in a few weeks and wanted to plan a short stop at Mountain Quest. Wonderful! Are you interested in jumping in and helping with our current project on change? My descriptions excited him such that when the opportunity to cut his trip short in New York arose, he committed the extra time to questing with us at the mountain. I say “us” here, not because David joined in that event, but because, meanwhile, my friend and colleague John Lewis, who had joined us in getting out the *Leading with the Future in Mind* book, had also volunteered to jump in and help.

Wow, is there a story with that Leadership book! I’d committed to keynoting in Singapore at a “KM and Leadership” conference, but then the dates for teaching at

Rotterdam Management School, Erasmus University, in the Netherlands changed and, of course, there was a conflict! I was under contract with RMS while simultaneously I had committed almost six months previously to the Singapore group! So, when I pulled out of that event, I promised to submit a “white paper” on the topic of their conference, and do a couple of minutes of video with core points. No big deal, right? Nope. Once I started there was so much to write. It became a book, howbeit at that time an eBook. Now, John was a member of what we had laughingly called the Universal Knowledge Guild, which had gotten together at Mountain Quest to explore what the future looked like in terms of learning. Sitting around the table was a scientist, a philosopher, a professor, a mathematician, an engineer, an educator and a psychologist.

So, three weeks before the book is due in Singapore I'm involved in an email with the Guild members, and I mention *The Course of Knowledge* book we'd completed earlier in the year, and that I was furiously writing a book on combining knowledge leadership and collaborative leadership. Within minutes, I received an email back from John, saying he had just founded The CoHero Institute, which was based on the relationship between leadership and learning. He added that if I ever wanted to co-write a paper, he'd love to join in. It didn't take me long to respond. I can imagine the expression on his face when he read that return email! “How about now? Can you give me three weeks?” And within the blink of an eye, or perhaps the time it took for that email to get to him and his response to get back to me: “You're on!” And he did just that, contributing ideas where holes remained, adding that extra value that can only happen when you have a draft text in hand, and helping meet a tight deadline to deliver a polished product. Thank God for John!

Again ... Back to the Books

Back to *The Profundity*, sure enough, during this writing journey John stopped by at the Inn for a passing night, and as I shared my current project we talked late into the night. So, I asked if he would like to join in the fun, and, with Arthur's dates in hand, planned to have him come for a couple of days at the same time. Meanwhile, my friend Theresa Bullard, a physicist who embraces the new paradigm of science and consciousness, as does David, had contributed the opening chapter for Part V on “The Alchemy of Change”. Now you will understand why there are 38 chapters in the books and not 34, with the other three added chapters as pragmatic examples from my early change work.

Those couple of days and nights spent sitting around a work table with Arthur and John in the old farmhouse are memorable. We went through every chapter, closely

reading the opening and closing paragraphs, pulling out the insights that begged highlighting, and creating questions for reflection. Then, we moved to the Readiness Assessment in Part II. Readiness assessment? Yep.

Every life is a journey, and at every point in this journey we are in the *process of becoming* something else. So, it can be difficult to secure a robust foundation from which to take our next steps. And there can be vastly different perspectives on where we are at any point in time. What is known to one is unknown to others or perceived very differently. What seems real to one person can be totally unreal to another. Your truth is considered just a perception by others, and vice versa. For example, one person's terrorist is another's war hero, an unfortunate reality that we collectively face in these challenging times.

A starting point to assessing our readiness to move into the future is co-creating an idea of what that future looks like. An example is "Conversations that Matter", a process developed by Arthur Shelley for facilitating co-creative conversations that matter.⁴⁷ The Readiness Self-Assessment, which uses a five-point Likert scale, provides the opportunity to weave 55 core ideas representing thought throughout the five books into the consciousness (and unconsciousness) of the reader. So, Arthur, John and I spent hours making sure this was the best set, writing characteristics related to each statement, and including chapter references for further detail.

It was at this point that we were ready to look at the work as a whole. It was Arthur who first came up with the name for this journey, the Intelligent Social Change Journey (ISCJ), although, if truth be told, a later email didn't quite translate the acronym accurately! Ah, memory is hard for all of us these days.

The ISCJ is a developmental journey of the body, mind and heart, moving from the heaviness of cause-and-effect linear extrapolations to the fluidity of co-evolving with our environment to the lightness of breathing our thought and feelings into reality. Grounded in development of our mental faculties, these are phase changes, each building on and expanding previous learning in our movement toward intelligent activity.

We are on this journey together; this is very much a *social* journey. Change does not occur in isolation. The deeper our understanding in relationship to others, the easier it is to move into the future. The quality of sympathy is needed as we navigate the linear, cause-and-effect characteristics of Phase 1. The quality of empathy is needed to navigate the co-evolving liquidity of Phase 2. The quality of compassion is needed to navigate the connected breath of the Phase 3 creative leap.

And so, *The Profundity* became OUR work, with an inclusive “OUR” engaging David, Arthur, Theresa, John and myself in this collaborative effort, as well as thoughts and ideas emerging from the consciousness field searching for a voice. I always thought the title was appropriate for the book, but as I reflect, it is appropriate for my profound gratitude in having prepared myself in this reality to bring it forward and share it with the world. As my friend Michael Stankosky writes:

My mind is numb (in a positive way) from a cursory reading of the book (I need to reread it more closely.) I can summarize my thoughts in one word: WOW!! I—who have a Bachelor's in Philosophy; minor in Shakespeare; three Masters' in Systems Management, Education, and International Relations; a Law Degree, and a doctorate in Engineering Management; and three careers in the military, business, and academia—have never quite seen a work of such ambition, scope, and consilience. Clearly, it could be overwhelming for a reader only schooled in one or two areas. The convergence of all our knowledge/experiences in the conscious and subconscious realms, and their relation to Change, is not an easy task.

This book is more than one on CHANGE. You have here a ‘tour de force’ on humankind itself on our planet, giving us a vocabulary and models which enable a deeper understanding and appreciation of the many complex forces that underpin the way we use knowledge for change. – Michael Stankosky, DSc, Professorial Lecturer, Knowledge Management, George Washington University

Related published work:



The Profundity and Bifurcation of Change Part I: Laying the Groundwork

by Alex Bennet and David Bennet with Arthur Shelley, Theresa Bullard and John Lewis

This book lays the groundwork for the **Intelligent Social Change Journey (ISCJ)**, a developmental journey of the body, mind and heart, moving from the heaviness of cause-and-effect linear extrapolations, to the fluidity of co-evolving with our environment, to the lightness of breathing our thought and feelings into reality. Grounded in development of our mental faculties, these are phase changes, each building on and expanding previous learning in our movement toward intelligent activity. As we lay the groundwork, we move through the concepts of change, knowledge, forces, self and consciousness. Then, recognizing that we are holistic beings, we provide a baseline model for individual change from within.



The Profundity and Bifurcation of Change Part II: Learning from the Past
by Alex Bennet and David Bennet with Arthur Shelley, Theresa Bullard and John Lewis

Phase 1 of the Intelligent Social Change Journey (ISCJ) is focused on the linear cause-and-effect relationships of logical thinking. Knowledge, situation dependent and context sensitive, is a product of the past. **Phase 1 assumes that for every effect there is an originating cause.** This is where we as a humanity, and as individuals, begin to develop our mental faculties. In this book we explore cause and effect, scan a kaleidoscope of change models, and review the modalities of change. Since change is easier and more fluid when we are grounded, we explore three interpretations of grounding. In preparation for expanding our consciousness, a readiness assessment and sample change agent's strategy are included.



The Profundity and Bifurcation of Change Part III: Learning in the Present
by Alex Bennet and David Bennet with Arthur Shelley, Theresa Bullard and John Lewis

As the world becomes increasingly complex, Phase 2 of the Intelligent Social Change Journey (ISCJ) is focused on **co-evolving with the environment.** This requires a deepening connection to others, moving into empathy. While the NOW is the focus, there is an increasing ability to put together patterns from the past and think conceptually, as well as extrapolate future behaviors. Thus, we look closely at the relationship of time and space, and pattern thinking. We look at the human body as a complex energetic system, exploring the role of emotions as a guidance system, and what happens when we have stuck energy. This book also introduces Knowledge Capacities, different ways of thinking that build capacity for sustainability.



The Profundity and Bifurcation of Change Part IV: Co-Creating the Future
by Alex Bennet and David Bennet with Arthur Shelley, Theresa Bullard and John Lewis

As we move into Phase 3 of the Intelligent Social Change Journey (ISCJ), **we fully embrace our role as co-creator.** We recognize the power of thought and the role of attention and intention in our ever-expanding search for a higher level of truth. Whether we choose to engage it or not, we explore mental discipline as a tool toward expanded consciousness. In preparing ourselves for the creative leap, there are ever-deepening connections with others. We now understand that the mental faculties are in service to the intuitional, preparing us to, and expanding our ability to, act in and on the world, living with conscious compassion and tapping into the intuitional at will.



The Profundity and Bifurcation of Change Part V: Living the Future
by Alex Bennet and David Bennet with Arthur Shelley, Theresa Bullard, John Lewis and Donna Panucci

We embrace the ancient art and science of Alchemy to **explore the larger shift underway for humanity** and how we can consciously and intentionally speed up evolution to enhance outcomes. In this conversation, we look at balancing and sensing, the harmony of beauty, and virtues for living the future. Conscious compassion, a virtue, is introduced as a state of being connected to morality and good character, inclusive of giving selfless service. We are now ready to refocus our attention on knowledge and consciousness, exploring their new roles in our advancement. And all of this expanding and growth as we move through the ISCJ is giving a wide freedom of choice as we approach the bifurcation.

What will we manifest?

Sharing a few other quotes from colleagues around the world:

"Experiencing as we are the Anthropocene and Post-truth Era, the urge to seek balance through knowledge and consciousness becomes imperative. This is a timely wake-up call to responsibly face our existential risks before it is too late, as much as a lucid and serene reflection on a path to wisdom." – Francisco Javier Carrillo, President, The World Capital Institute

"This masterpiece is intriguing and compelling. The authors do a masterful job in laying a comprehensive foundation to equip the reader to discover, use and share knowledge to co-create a new reality, a reality filled with intelligent activity, which fosters an increasing depth of connection between people and, ultimately, brings humanity together and manifests as Oneness, compassion, love and beauty." –Dr. Joyce Avedisian, Business Owner and Consultant

"Wow! I loved it! The wealth of the ideas! The wise weaving of the multiple perspectives! This is a great guiding tool for anybody who wishes to lead change instead of being led by it! The authors did a great job in creating a very rich body of knowledge on change—how to understand it on all levels—micro and macro—how to deal with it, how to turn it into a journey full of opportunities. This is both inspiring and practical—sheer joy! Bravo!" -Edna Pasher, Founder and Chair of Pasher Associates and of ISCI (Israel Smart Cities Institute) and of Status - Management Magazine.

"We are in a world with global warming, not enough resources, too many people, and more. We are at a fork in the road and can choose to combine our efforts to make changes and care for one another, or continue the path we're already on to our demise. By grounding ourselves and opening our minds to new concepts and ideas, a new awakening of global thought is ready to take a creative leap towards an enlightened future. The time is here, and the choice is ours! Dr. Alex Bennet and renowned others have combined their efforts to aid the coming change in the way we humans think. I've been truly inspired by the unreleased portions of the books I was privileged to read. If we all do something, ever so small, we will find a brighter future for humanity as a family, and for our children! Excitingly, we are standing in the doorway of an Enlightened Creative Leap ... Awaiting Our Awakening." -Cindy Scott, Poet

Multidimensional inspiration! Part IV is an impressive work documented with very insightful aspects. It is a very timely reading on the growing Quest for Truth and Wisdom. As a very deepening mindful reading, it is addressing wisdom beyond Knowledge in several multi dimensions, including the neuroscience. Furthermore, it is guiding the reader to Intelligent Reflective Activity that will expand the creative capacity for navigating based on intelligence. In line with the book it is also an illustration of wise giving for a choice of Happiness Journeying. — Leif Edvinsson, The World's First Professor on Intellectual Capital, Lund and Hong Kong

This masterpiece is inspired! As I was reading through and contemplating this wonderful Alchemy of Change, these words came to mind: The seeds have been sown, the end of the tunnel now opening to a sprouting field of light. There are people already there, young and old, all colors, all sizes, glowing in their individuation and diversity. Whiffs of thought catch our attention, and we see the wisdom in our search for truth as with conscious compassion we collaboratively create a new frame of reference for humanity. It begins here. It begins now. It begins with the Profundity and Bifurcation of Change – Barbara Bullard, Professor of Speech Communication, Orange Coast College; Reiki Master

"Another insightful and powerful book from the Bennets and colleagues! A deep scientific, social and psychological analysis and reflection on various ways to create change in the complex world in which we currently live. A great thought-provoking book that you will read and re-read!" – Dr. Vincent Ribière, Managing Director, Institute for Knowledge and Innovation Management-Southeast Asia, Bangkok University

"I read the book with great excitement and the authors have achieved a consilient publication like none other. This book serves as a roadmap, a rearview mirror, a societal plea, a sign that humanity is evolving, and is a call for love. It is about knowledge, decision making, virtue, beauty, alchemy, compassion and hope. It is about Oneness and the mystery of the Myst. What a fine result. This book puts such light into the Universe!" –Susan Dreiband, Chief Knowledge Officer & Senior Policy Analyst, US Forest Service, Retired; US Forest Service, Change Management Champion & Consultant, Retired; Reiki Master and Energy Healer



Where the mountains meet the library ...

Chapter 7

Possibilities that are YOU!

Mountain Vignettes

Alex: The morning air coming through the cracked window was cool and sweet, touching the edge of my consciousness as the soft voice that lured me from sleep continued. *These ideas are meant to be shared with everyone. You will write 22 little books in a conversational manner, each one with seven ideas, insights, examples and learning exercises. Here are the titles ...* As there was a pause, I opened my eyes and grabbed the pen and paper I kept beside my bed for just such occasions. Okay, I'm ready. And the titles poured out:

Transcendent Beauty

Grounding

Engaging Forces

Conscious Compassion

Truth in Context

Attention and Intention

Living Virtues for Today

ME as Cocreator

Connections as Patterns

Knowing

All Things in Balance

The Emerging Self

The ERC's of Intuition

The Emoting Guidance System

Seeking Wisdom

Associative Patterning and Attracting

The Creative Leap

Staying on the Path

The Art of Thought Adjusting

The Humanness of Humility

The Bifurcation

Beyond Action

In the quietude of the moment, I glanced over the titles, counting them. Then the voice, not yet finished, added a final clause: *You will have these written by Christmas.* It

was early October. Oh, my. Was that an order or a prediction? I ran down the titles again as David began stirring beside me, waking up to the everyday challenges brought in with the sun.

Okay. These are clearly ideas coming out of *The Profundity* books. I can do this. Then my eyes caught on the title “Beyond Action”. *The Profundity* books stop with the final chapter, “The Bifurcation”. What on Earth is beyond action! I laughed at the thought, realizing the experiential nature of human life here on Earth, and realizing that beyond action was certainly not referring to physical reality, but to the larger journey of the soul. My monkey chatter began throwing out questions, letting me know I DIDN’T know how to write that book. “It’s okay”, I calmed the little one spewing stuff in my head. If I am meant to write it, it will come. And, of course, it did, as you read in Chapter 4, “The Collision of the Experiential and the Existential”.

These little books—which we call Conscious Look Books—take full advantage of the reader’s lived experience to share what can sometimes be difficult concepts. We live in a world that is tearing itself apart, where people are out of control and wanting to control others, rebelling from years of real and perceived abuse and suppression of thought. Yet, this chaos offers us as a humanity the opportunity to make a giant leap forward. By opening ourselves to ourselves, we are able to fully explore who we are and who we can become. And with that exploration comes a glimmer of hope as we begin to reclaim the power of each and every mind developing through the lived human experience!

It would be a joy to share with you a few excerpts from these books, which are titled *Possibilities that are YOU!* The first little book is on Transcendent Beauty. Beauty can change the world! And so, we share here a few short sections from that text, and in the sharing, we will include the beautiful artwork by visitors reflecting the Mountain Quest farm, and one painting contributed to The Fantasy Room of the Mountain Quest Inn.

BEAUTY IS TRANSCENDENT⁴⁸

Do you remember the last time you watched a sunset, listened to music, or saw someone special and thought, “Beautiful!” How did you feel? Close your eyes for a moment and remember that feeling. There’s a pleasurable tingle ... maybe it’s a warm wave swelling in your chest ... a floating sensation of joy ... a deep breath that exits with a smile. Whatever the feeling, it’s a really *good* feeling, and it leaves you, well, *in a state of peace*.

So, what exactly is beauty? That's not an easy question to answer, because beauty means different things to different people. It is definitely based on the personal experiences of the individual. Of course, there are ways to talk about what beauty is. For example, in the 2007 movie *Next*, the hero, Nicholas Gage, says: "There's an Italian painter named Carlotti, and he defined beauty. He said it was the summation of the parts working together in such a way that nothing needed to be added, taken away or altered."

While to my knowledge there has never been an Italian painter named Carlotti, those words seem to make sense. Beauty is that special state where something seems, well, *perfect*, at least from a personal point of view! If it's a sunset we are watching, there's just the right variety and amount of color. If it's the music we are listening to, the melody, tonal patterns and rhythm make my heart sing, or my head whirl. If it's that special someone walking through my life ... just use your imagination for that description!

The psychologist Rollo May felt that a person who could apprehend beauty was able to discover truth. I tend to believe he may be right. The recognition of beauty begins with the freedom—and desire—to choose that which is beautiful. *Life is what it chooses to be*. When we choose beauty as our expression in life, or sense beauty around us, we are simultaneously exercising our individual choice and connecting to larger concepts of truth.

Howard Gardner, a Harvard psychologist who developed the theory of multiple intelligences, a really bright mind, wrote a more recent 2011 book titled *Truth, Beauty, and Goodness Reframed: Educating for the Virtues in the Age of Truthiness and Twitter*. That's a pretty good title for today's world, sort of brings the old Greek philosophers' virtues of truth, beauty, and goodness into our context.

Gardner agrees that beauty is the property of experiences, because any experience can be considered by the individual experiencing it as beautiful. Consider your personal experiences of beauty. Gardner identifies three things that are required to have these experiences. They are (1) it has to be interesting to the individual, (2) there has to be something about it that will be remembered, and (3) it has to hold our interest. That pleasurable tingle we mentioned earlier—a sign from our emotional system—only happens when these three things are present.

Building on Gardner's third point, maybe beauty has something to do with our personal passions? There are some things that we like that seem to stay around for a long time, and that we can't get enough of. But are we getting ahead of ourselves? Let's explore beauty more deeply and see if we can get to the root of what the experience of beauty means to each of us.



Figure 7-1. *The Art of Corbie Crouse*

There’s a direct connection between our senses and beauty. The way that we learn and grow is through experiencing and interacting with our environment. This begins with our senses. If there is no information coming into our mind, then the mind would be mindless, that is, it wouldn’t have any resources to construct itself! Fortunately, our bodies are built to experience life.

When we as human beings think about our senses, we generally think of the five senses of physical form—seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling and touching. Since most of us are fortunate enough to use those senses regularly as part of everyday living, we know how they work. For example, if something you are eating doesn’t taste good, you spit it out. If you’re trying to read and it’s dark, you turn on a light.

We also have two powerful “inner” senses, which increasingly come into awareness with maturity, that are a very important part of our everyday experience. The first inner sense is located in the heart center and has very much to do with our connectedness with others. The heart has long been associated with compassion and love, which help us deepen our connections to others. A truth that most of us will recognize is that we are social beings. We *need* other people in our lives, and our lives are the richer for those

experiences. Helen Keller, who was both blind and deaf, recognized the beauty of these connections when she shared, “The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched—they must be felt with the heart.”

The second inner sense is located in the crown, right at the middle of the top of our head, that soft spot that begins to close shortly after birth. This sense connects us to the larger whole, whether we perceive that larger whole as the ecosystem of the earth, a global humanity, an energy field, a consciousness field, a quantum field, the God field, Heaven, or any other variety of names. Whatever your belief, we as individual human beings are part of something larger, and, if we listen carefully, we can sense that larger field of which we are a part. For example, in the religious experience we may pray to God. Humans are the only “animals” that have the ability to question where we come from and contemplate creation and the concept of God.

Why is it important to understand our sensing capability in this conversation about beauty? Okay, yes, there is a very important reason. Everyone’s beauty is different. *Your* experience of beauty is very different than your friend’s experience or my experience. Yet there is an overarching pattern ... or maybe you can think of a better word than “pattern” to describe this phenomenon. And here it is: when *you* are experiencing beauty, it is the most important thing in your mind; in fact, it is the ONLY thing in your mind! The full experience of beauty engages ALL your senses in ALL three focus areas (physical, mental, emotional). There’s no room to be thinking or feeling anything else! Close your eyes and remember this kind of experience, and you’ll see what I mean.

The experiencing of beauty is a “now” experience. And if you are fully engaged in the “now” of beauty, then there’s little room for any of the negative energies from the past and present that periodically, and sometimes regularly, hang onto us. Let this idea soak in for a few minutes.

There are, of course, other good reasons for us to understand our sensing capabilities. One simple reason is that when we understand the way our “self” works, it helps us understand why we think or feel (and therefore respond) certain ways in certain situations. For example, when we understand that much of this processing is done in our unconscious, it helps to understand how we know certain things when we don’t remember learning them or previously experiencing them.

Another good reason is to realize *how much you* are capable of processing. The limits you place on yourself—perhaps defining yourself by lacks in terms of experiences such as traveling, educational opportunities, social relationships, etc.—are self-imposed. While the choices you make in life certainly impact your growth and learning, through the process of living you have gained innumerable experiences. In other words, you KNOW a great deal more than you know you know. And it’s important to understanding the amazing person you really are.

Sometimes it's helpful to set up a contrast to help understand a thing, and certainly the idea of beauty seems to be directly opposed to the idea of, say, war. There are different ways to think about contrast. For example, physicist Niles MacFlouer⁴⁹ says that in order to achieve beauty in the physical world, you need to reduce conflict. Forces we create destroy beauty. This certainly makes sense. Consider the great works of art (architectural books, paintings, sculptures) that were destroyed during World War II. As an example in today's world, Niles uses the Israeli's use of force in an attempt to counter forces being used on them, and vice versa. This, of course, is called war, and the reason it is unlikely to resolve any issues is because war has the immediate effect of destroying the senses (desensitizing us) and *uglifying* the environment that you are using force against. So, not only is art destroyed during war, but the appreciators of art are desensitized, and the artists, creatives and intellectuals are murdered and imprisoned ... they are considered dangerous since art and beauty have the power to inspire revolutions!

The award-winning children's book artist, Jackie Urbanovic, looks at this relationship between war and beauty from a different frame of reference. She says that there are times when under the duress of destruction, worry and loss that our sense of beauty is heightened. For example, the sight of a single flower in the debris or the helping hand of a stranger can lift our spirits, literally blossoming into a beautiful experience. Nowhere is this clearer than in the work of Viktor Frankl,⁵⁰ who discovered moments of love and beauty of thought in the midst of the horrors of Auschwitz.



Figure 7-2. The Art of Jackie Urbanovic

Beauty can become more important during difficult times because it reinstates hope. Further, Jackie says that memories of intense, negative experiences can also lead to the creation of art as a way to understand and transform those experiences from destructive to meaningful, and even beautiful.

Back to our senses. From the viewpoint of our senses, beauty is something good, pleasing, attractive and satisfying, a combination of qualities, impressive to touch, feel, look at, taste, smell, listen to and think about. As we reflect on the beauty of what we see, our thought becomes more beautiful and we express this to others, helping them see beauty in relationship to their own personal experiences. When this happens, the field of thought of which we are a part is lighter, and everyone enters into the experience of beauty!

Thus, beauty enhances and unifies the senses in our body *and in others*. This may begin with a single sense recognizing beauty and then spreading to other senses, that is, if we “see” something that resonates with the beauty—perhaps a painting that engages us with color and triggers memories and inspires our thinking—it is connecting to memories in the past, with the potential of engaging additional senses.

There is no doubt this is one of the ideas behind *Feng Shui*, which was developed in China about 4,000 years ago and was originally linked to the land and rivers (*feng* is wind, and *shui* is water). Today, millions of people use it to live in harmony with their environment and create abundance and prosperity. In *Feng Shui*, beauty is created via balance, which reflects the trade-off between, or a balanced integration of, the five natural elements (fire, water, metal, wood and earth). When you take a look at the beauty of a Japanese or Zen garden, you begin to get a feeling for this balance.

Beauty is love made visible. These words were expressed by Reefka Schneider,⁵¹ one of the foremost artists of “la frontera,” the binational region of the Rio Grande Valley in South Texas. Reefka’s electromagnetic sensitivity found relief in the natural setting of Mountain Quest, her *sanctuary in time and space*. As Reefka describes,

I would rise before the sun did so I could paint the silence and color of early morning. Later I would climb the mountain and paint, perhaps observed by a red fox or young bear ... At Mountain Quest I experienced the singular beauty of the spontaneous statement that small watercolor work provided me as I attempted to capture the feeling of the soul of the place, that transcendent connection to the inner life that is both silent and beautiful. (Reefka)



Figure 7-3. *The Art of Reefka Schneider*

Reefka is right. Beauty is love made visible. But I think the way she uses the word *visible* means more than just seeing something with your eyes. It seems to have a larger meaning. In this context, I think it means “known.” You can know things by seeing them, but you can also know things by feeling them, hearing them, tasting them, touching them, connecting with them, and, well, just by knowing them ... Hey! We’re talking about those seven senses we all have! All of our senses provide ways of knowing. That’s a pretty good idea we just came up with.

Now, Plato believed that the love between two people was a stepping stone to love between souls, and then an opening to *ideas* and *philosophy*. As Plato says in his *Symposium*, “... the lover is turned to the great sea of beauty, and, gazing upon this, he gives birth to many gloriously beautiful ideas and theories, in unstinting love of wisdom.”⁵² When love is an attachment between two people, the very act of gazing upon the beloved, “the great sea of beauty,” gives birth to beautiful ideas and theories. With the attachment of love, observing beauty leads to more beauty!

Beauty is transcendent. Every once in a while, you really have to give it to those philosophers! They knew what they were writing about. In that *Symposium* piece that Plato wrote—the one we talked about in the previous paragraph—we’re told that the beauties of the earth are to be used as stepping stones moving humanity upwards through fair forms to fair practices to fair notes and, ultimately, to absolute beauty, which Plato described as fair living.

This word “fair” seemed to have a lot of play in Plato’s words, I mean, he used it a lot. So, it must be a pretty important concept. What does that mean to me? Maybe related to words like honesty, truth, right, reasonableness, impartiality, just ... maybe representing a person who is equally selfless and self-knowing. This is a *moral beauty*.

What do you think “fair” means? Are we close to understanding it? Now that I recall a thought flitting around in the back of my head, Plato said something about beauty being truth and truth beauty, so I think our definition of “fair” is pretty close to his thinking. As we’ve all learned from today’s media-sphere, there’s beauty in truth.

Plato talks about the beauties of the earth. We talked about those when we use the example of Mountain Quest as a way to share beauty: the beauty of nature, the beauty of experiences, the beauty of thought, and the beauty of sharing and learning from each other. These beauties of the earth are to be used as “steppingstones” as we move from fair forms to fair practices to fair notes to fair living.



Figure 7-4 . *The Art of Cindy Taylor*

This ascent to beauty is *Plato's ladder of love*. The words are a bit strange to my ears of today, but we can dig a little deeper and try to understand them when we read a bit more of his work. It's pretty clear that "form" represents the human body. Almost everyone has loved someone they thought was beautiful. Then, as we continue on our path to the next steppingstone, we move from bodily beauty to the beauty of institutions, what today we more often than not think about as organizations. I wonder if Plato's word "practices" doesn't have to do with the work we do in these organizations?

The next steppingstone—what Plato refers to as notes—has to do with learning. We are here in this world experiencing (acting and interacting), and through this process *learning and expanding*. That certainly rings true! And that brings us back to reflecting on the beauty of thought and thought as beauty.

Finally, Plato says we reach absolute beauty. This is hard for me to understand. I have a scientist spouse who tells me there are no absolutes. "How can there be absolutes? To be absolute something would have always existed in the past and always will exist in the future. We as humans can't experience that; thus, there are no absolutes in our existence."

That logic seems to turn around on itself. Certainly, he has a point, we do have finite lives. So, following his logic trail, absolutes couldn't exist in *our existence* since the human is finite. I mean, my dad always said you could depend on two things in life, taxes and dying. He also said there are two things you don't argue with your friends about: love and politics. Boy, that politics idea sure has proven itself right in our current political environment! My dad had a lot of wisdom.

Wait! What if Plato's "absolute beauty" isn't really referring to the physical focus, and maybe not the emotional focus or mental focus either! Just maybe, we're talking about *the beauty of the soul*. Absolute beauty is achieving beauty at the soul level! Now I can understand why this is called the ladder of love. Beauty and love work together.

We wish there was enough room to share more of the amazing learning that emerged as these little books were written. Oh! And at the end of each little book there is a page titled "What does this mean to me? This provides the opportunity to pick out a few key points from the little book and repeat them, sort of a reminder. So, if we can pull these out from all 22 little books, we can perhaps include them as an appendix. Yep! That's sort of a summary of sharing. (See Appendix D.) And there's even more ... for example, there is an exercise in the *Transcendent Beauty* book called **Choosing Beauty**, which you might enjoy.

Exercise: CHOOSING BEAUTY

STEP 1: If you have one of those watches that has an alarm on it, set it to go off on the hour every hour. If you don't, go about your day checking your watch regularly. When the alarm goes off, or when it is close to the hour, turn the alarm off, stop whatever you are doing and go to Step 2.

STEP 2: Slowly turn completely around, scanning those things that are close to you, say within five or six feet. Spend a moment thinking about each of the things that come into your view. About each, *consider*: How is this useful? Who created this? Does it serve a purpose? Do the pieces all fit together well? Are the colors pleasing? Allow yourself to be fully in the NOW; FEEL into the item upon which you are focusing. Allow each item their moment of importance.

STEP 3: Slowly take a second complete turn, this time focusing further out into the distance, reflecting on all that comes into your view. If you are outside, you may wish to take a third turn to reflect on the far distance. Give every item its special moment in time.

STEP 4: Closing your eyes, consider all of the things you have brought into your focus and how they all fit together. Imagine yourself as the model in a famous artist's painting, with all of the things around you of significance to the painting. What story do they tell? What is your relationship to these items? What do these things that surround you tell you about the figure in the painting, that is, YOU?

STEP 5: Take a leap into the future, say 100 years forward. Using your creative imagination, picture yourself in the middle of an art auction, and there in front of you is the picture of YOU and all those things surrounding you. Many people are bidding, and the price gets higher and higher. As people keep bidding, you look closely at the painting, and you begin to see *why* they are bidding. There is a relationship between the person that is YOU and all those things that surround you. They look REAL and yet there is an invisible energy that says more than the picture. You look closely at your face, captured with the eyes closed, and see a wonder expressed there. You note that the artist has captured the knowing that is occurring in the moment at hand, that even with the eyes closed this figure has *full awareness of who they are and where they are*. The bids continue to go higher and higher.

STEP 6: Still in that place, you hear the auctioneer pause and say: Is there another bid? This is a *Carlotti*, a special picture. The summation of the parts work together in such a way that nothing needs to be added, taken away or altered. The artist has captured a perfect life moment.

STEP 7: Still in that future place, push your hand into your pocket and pull out a credit card with no limits, recognizing that in this place you are wealthy and have the means to purchase this painting if you choose. **Do you choose to do so?**

We sure hope that you DO choose to buy the painting! A perfect life moment ... of YOU! And that moment will soon be left behind, for as YOU move through your life of thoughts, feelings and actions—even when you have to repeat things over and over again as part of the experience—YOU are advancing toward the next level of consciousness.

Here's the bottom line. Everything that has been learned and continues to be learned is out there ... and as a student of life, YOU have access to it all. So often it is expressed in ways that don't make sense because of the language and media being used. It just isn't presented conversationally, and you don't have a chance to ask questions from your unique point of view.

That why the little Conscious Look Books were written. These are conversational in nature, and further conversations are welcome. We invite your thoughts and questions, not guaranteeing answers because there is still so much to learn, but happy to join in the conversation. Visit Mountain Quest Inn and Retreat Center www.mountainquestinn.com located in the Allegheny Mountains of West Virginia or email alex@mountainquestinstitute.com

We do not know what comes with tomorrow. But today our hearts are still pumping, and we are still learning and writing. So, as David reminds us: *Run with the future!* And come visit us where the mountains meet the library.

Related published work:

*The Intelligent Social Change Journey:
Foundation for the Possibilities that are YOU!*

by Alex Bennet, David Bennet, Arthur Shelley,
Theresa Bullard and John Lewis



The Possibilities that are YOU!

(22 volumes)

by Alex Bennet

These 22 concepts are part of the learning journey of which we are all a part, the Intelligent Social Change Journey (ISCJ). This is a developmental journey of the body, mind and heart, moving from the heaviness of cause-and-effect linear extrapolations, to the fluidity of co-evolving with our environment, to the lightness of breathing our thought and feelings into reality. Grounded in development of our mental faculties, these are phase changes, each building on and expanding previous learning in our movement toward intelligent activity. (See Appendix D for titles.)





As the light dims ...

Afterward

Alex and David deeply enjoy their mountains and their library. They enjoy sharing books with each other and they especially enjoy sharing books with others who find their way to Mountain Quest. The mountains have a modest elevation enclosing a verdant valley. Their library, on the other hand, presents remarkable human dimensions with 30,000 plus volumes in an exquisitely inviting space that displays appreciation and caring for this brilliant sampling of the human record. So, what really comes together in the nexus of these two wonderful influences? What is enabled?

It is notable that mountains are more impactful on human experience than most of us would estimate. For example, mountains are said to serve as the water towers of Earth. Nearly half of our world's irrigation water flows from mountains. Likewise, mountains are the principal sources of fresh water on this planet. I like to note that even as the mountains offer refreshment to our bodies, *they exude freshness to the human spirit*. This happens in myriad ways. Individually and collectively, we are refreshed by their grandeur and their exclusive environments. Moreover, in many cultures and religions, humanity has been refreshed by the transcending discoveries of explorers, leaders and others throughout history who experienced epiphanies in mountain realms. Examples abound. Moses on Mt. Sinai; Mt. Fuji, near Tokyo, one of Japan's three sacred mountains has been the destination of poets and pilgrimages for thousands of years; and Mount Kailash in Tibet is sacred to four religions. The global list is rather endless. Indeed, *mountain heights separate us from the terrestrial experiences of life and lift us to higher planes and viewpoints*. They not only physically raise us up, they also lift our gaze and elevate our thoughts. In their preeminence, we abound in perceptions and perspectives that enable us.

David and Alex have sought deeper awareness and comprehension in their private collection of volumes of the sciences, history, spirituality, leadership etc., that describe the evolving human existence. The collection is an insightful blending of classical and traditional thought and modern civilization. They have gathered their volumes with specific intent; they want to know how things work now and how they can work better, and they search for the elevation of humanity. One could say that their library is a search for deeper learning and purer knowledge. Moreover, you can see from the breadth of their work and writings, that the undertaking is to know what is available and what is needed to progress beyond humankind's current capacities and existence.

Throughout history there has been a relatively limited number of private libraries of large size. A few examples include the Tianyi Gi collection in China during the 16th Century Ming Dynasty which held 70,000 volumes of antique writings. It has been exceeded by private collections in India containing over 100,000 volumes. Queen Elizabeth's library in Windsor Castle is an immense and valuable collection. American founding fathers built substantial collections; most notably Thomas Jefferson, whose

private library provided volumes for the beginnings of the Library of Congress. In more recent times, great collections have been amassed by owners like George W. Vanderbilt, III at Biltmore, George Lucas's collection at the Skywalker Ranch, the private library of designer Karl Lagerfeld, and the private library of Richard Macksey, former director of the humanities department at Johns Hopkins University, with over 70,000 books and manuscripts.

David and Alex's collection at Mountain Quest falls into a specialized category. This collection was largely gathered for the research purposes of its owners. As you peruse books on their shelves, you notice in many a notation system assigning value to specific content. This process reflects how purpose influenced the acquisitions.

To be sure, *where the mountains meet the library the nexus for quest is enabled*. It is a formidable coalescing. It is the nature of quests that there is a confluence of vision, direction, and purpose. Often, there is a clear destiny; that is, there is an envisioned result that will be partially or fully achieved. Hence a quest is both a journey and a destination. Quests create a confluence of heart, mind, and soul that engages one fully. From the beginning of Mountain Quest, Alex and David were engaged in a new level of effort as their Quest began to crystalize. You can see it in the pace of their writings. It reminds me of the work of Harvey Cushing, the father of modern-day neurological surgery. During one ten-year period he wrote over 100 documents and six books, thousands of words per day. As Alex and David articulated their insights, more and more ideas took on a life of their own. Because of the breadth of their interests, it's understandable that consilience or the cross-pollination of major disciplines has occurred. A prime example is the creation of a new theory of adult learning coming from the intersection of neuroscience and traditional adult learning theories. Undergirding this theory, as well as other major developments in their research, is a range of deep work with wide-ranging fundamentals such as the nature of knowledge and the process of change.

Alex and David have researched and delighted in many disciplines and domains. *The Quest: Where the Mountains Meet the Library*, is an anthology that introduces you to their Quest for learning and shares some of their results. For me, it's engaging in much the same way that Thoreau's classic *Walden* is. It lets you into their hearts and minds and offers you much to ponder in our increasingly complex world.

What can come of their Quest? Take your pick of groundbreaking ideas. For me, I am moved in this collection by "Dreaming Global Coherence". The shift in recent years to increasing distrust and animosity for American values, institutions, and relationships raises a clarion call for vigilance. Our continuing Quest as Americans and as voyagers in a larger world is on a higher plane; it is as lofty as our mountains.

Robert Turner (September 15, 2021)

Appendix A

Expanding the Self Assumptions

Assumption 1: The Quantum Field, which has many names such as Noosphere or God Field, refers to an unlimited field of possibilities. When things within this field are heading in the same direction, they group together and create a subfield; uniquely different from the infinite field, pursuing a probability, yet pulling along related elements outside that probability. So it is with consciousness; and in this subfield, uniquely different, we become the co-creators of our Self and our life.

Assumption 2: Learning is the creation and application of knowledge, with knowledge considered to be *the capacity (potential or actual) to take effective action in varied and uncertain situations*.⁵³ Knowledge consists of understanding, insights, meaning, intuition, creativity, judgment, and the ability to anticipate the outcome of our actions.

Assumption 3: Experience is the primary realm for human learning. Learning and knowledge are two aspects of a continuous cycle as we move through life, with learning enabling the creation of knowledge and applied knowledge (effective action) creating the feedback for continuous learning.

Assumption 4: As technology and the complex systems it produces increase at an exponential rate, the magnitude and transfer rate of information is exploding. This information explosion sets the stage for the following hypothesis: World complexity is increasing and, because of this, the continuous creation and application of knowledge and learning is essential for the future welfare of the planet. Complex systems can rarely be understood by analytical thinking or deductive reasoning alone. Therefore, deep knowledge created from effortful practice, the development of intuition and tacit knowledge through experience and continuous learning, and the recognition of and sensitivity to our inner knowing is required.

Assumption 5: Human beings and the organizations we create are complex adaptive systems.

A complex adaptive system (CAS) contains many parts that interact with each other. Complex adaptive systems are partially ordered systems that unfold and evolve over time. They are largely self-organizing, learning and adaptive—thus their name. To survive and thrive, they foster and create new ideas, scan the environment, try new approaches, observe the outcomes, and change the way they operate. To continuously adapt, they must operate in perpetual disequilibrium, which can result in unpredictable behavior. Having nonlinear relationships, the CAS creates global properties that are called emergent because they seem to emerge from the multitude of elements within the

system and the relationships among these elements. Examples are life, ecosystems, economies, organizations and cultures.

Assumption 6: The human mind is an associative patterner that is continuously re-creating knowledge for the situation at hand. Knowledge exists in the human brain in the form of stored or expressed neural patterns that may be selected, activated, mixed and/or reflected upon through thought. Incoming information is associated with stored information. From this mixing process, new patterns are created that may represent understanding, meaning and the capacity to anticipate, to various degrees, the outcomes of potential actions. Thus, knowledge is context sensitive and situation dependent, with the mind continuously growing, restructuring and creating increased organization (information) and knowledge for the moment at hand.

Assumption 7: We are social creatures who live in an entangled world; our brains are linked together. We are in continuous interaction with those around us, and the brain is continuously changing in response. Over the course of evolution, mechanisms have developed in our brains to enable us to learn through social interactions. Neuroscience findings supporting this assumption are presented in Chapter 14.

Assumption 8: The unconscious mind is multidimensional and has a vast store of tacit knowledge available to us. It has only been in the past few decades that cognitive psychology and neuroscience have begun to seriously explore unconscious mental life. Polanyi felt that tacit knowledge consists of *a range* of conceptual and sensory information and images that could be used to make sense of a situation or event.⁵⁴ We agree. The unconscious mind is incredibly powerful, on the order of more than half a million times more processing speed than the conscious stream of thought. The challenge is to make better use of our tacit knowledge through creating greater connections with the unconscious, building and expanding the resources stored in the unconscious, deepening areas of resonance, and sharing tacit resources.

Assumption 9: There are still vast workings of the human mind and its connections to higher-order energies that we do not understand. The limitations we as humans place on our capacities and capabilities are created from past reference points that have been developed primarily through the rational and logical workings of the mechanical functioning of our mind/brain, an understanding that has come through extensive intellectual effort. Yet, we now recognize that knowledge is a living form of information, tailored by our minds specifically for situations at hand (see *Assumption 4* above). The totality of knowledge can no easier be codified and stored than can our feelings, nor would it be highly beneficial to do so in a changing and uncertain environment. Thus, in this book, given the limitations of our own perceptions and understanding, we consider and explore areas and phenomena that move beyond our paradigms and beliefs regarding learning and knowledge to the larger area of knowing beyond the basic activities of our cognitive functions to consider the energy patterns within which humanity is immersed.

Appendix B

ICALS: Guidelines for Learning

1. The Infinite Potential of the Human Mind

This research identifies a number of neuroscientific findings that signify the almost unbounded limits of the human mind. While, to our understanding, no one knows the number of neurons and synapses that may be involved in any specific thought or idea, given some reasonable assumptions it is easy to show that the number of possible thoughts in the human mind becomes extremely large, larger than 10^{79} —the estimated number of particles in the universe. The plasticity of the mind/brain, the ability of thoughts to change the physiological architecture of the brain and to impact the entire body, its potential efficacy throughout our lives, and its penchant for growth and development are clear evidence of the potential and magnificence of this mind/brain we carry with us throughout life.

The effects of a positive environment, good nutrition and health, and regular exercise also provide evidence of the high potential of all individuals. What this indicates is that parents have more influence, and therefore more responsibility, for the support and guidance of their children and their children's environment. It also indicates that adults, no matter where they start, have the tremendous possibility and opportunity to learn, grow, and develop as individual human beings. From a survival—and perhaps sustainability—perspective, taking advantage of our potential as individuals, families, organizations, and nations may be our most important contribution to the existence and advancement of the human race, and perhaps the survival of all of Earth's life forms.

The Republic of Singapore, named the most admired knowledge city in the world in both 2007 and 2008, recognized the need to restructure their complete educational system. As Wong and his colleagues describe, “The educational system was restructured in the last few years in order to foster greater creativity and instill higher-order (i.e., analytical, creative, and systems) thinking skills amongst its school children. There is now a substantial reduction in curriculum content and student assessment in favor of team learning, problem solving and process skills acquisition.”⁵⁵ These authors also note that the objective is to create a future workforce capable of advanced, continuous learning, un-learning, and relearning. As neuroscience and its related sciences continue to contribute to our knowledge of human learning, we will be able to take better and better advantage of that with which we have been gifted.

2. The Powerful Role of Beliefs

As described earlier in this study, the mind/brain learns through mixing incoming information patterns with internally existing patterns of information and knowledge, thereby creating new patterns that represent understanding and meaning (the process of associative patterning). These internal patterns are significantly influenced by the beliefs and theories created and held by the Self. Lipton⁵⁶ makes the point that both positive and negative beliefs impact every aspect of our life, including our health. Because of their power to influence our decisions and actions, beliefs have influence over our learning. A good representation of this idea is that *if an individual believes that they cannot learn, then in fact, they will not be able to learn*. For example, when social relationships and attitudes cause an individual to feel incapable of learning, they experience a self-fulfilling prophecy. On the other hand, if an individual believes they can learn, then in fact, they can and will be able to learn, moving through environmental influence to personal decisions, to beliefs, to frames of reference, to understanding, to knowledge, to action.

Thus an individual's attitudes toward their own capability and efficacy of learning is critical to their capacity to learn. It is for this reason that we should seriously consider and question our own beliefs to see if they are aligned with our personal objectives and values. If not, then we may want to reinvestigate the basis and assumptions that drive these beliefs and expand our awareness to the possibility of beliefs more in alignment with our learning goals.

Another role of beliefs is influencing health. The biologist Bruce Lipton forwards that, "If you choose to see a world full of love, your body will respond by growing in health. If you choose to live in a dark world full of fear, your body's health will be compromised as you physiologically close yourself down in a protection response."⁵⁷ Referring to his own book, *The Biology of Belief*, Lipton says that the secret of life is all about learning to harness our own minds to promote and accelerate growth.

3. The Influence of the Environment

Influence can be thought of as a power to sway or affect. This relationship may significantly influence the learner's stress level, self-confidence, and tentativeness or interest in any specific learning. Here is where the learner must recognize what is happening and seek to modify or change the environment to better enable successful learning. At the same time, an individual having a dialogue with another learner needs to recognize the importance of the environment relative to the efficacy of either party's learning process. Often the environmental influence is through embodied experiences without conscious awareness. Other paths to the unconscious include affective, intuitive and spiritual—all contributing to learning.⁵⁸ Placing the potential effects of the learning environment, both good and bad, next to the potential power of the human mind places

the responsibility for learning and personal development directly in the hands of the adult learner, not the environment.

Another aspect that came up in this study is the local environment within which cells exist throughout the body. From epigenetics it becomes clear that the local environment of the cell could have significant influence on whether or not the DNA of the cell was expressed. This means that genes do not have to be destiny and that an individual should in some cases be able to influence the potential effect of their genetic heritage, and some of the influences may be passed on to their offspring. As Church says, "There is mounting evidence that invisible factors of consciousness and intention—such as our beliefs, feelings, prayers, and attitudes—play an important role in the epigenetic control of genes."⁵⁹

4. The Responsibility of Knowledge

This guideline comes from the recognition that most societies hold individuals responsible for their actions. Knowledge has been defined as the capacity to take effective action and learning is the creation and application of knowledge. In other words, those individuals who learn and create knowledge have a duty to implement that knowledge responsibly. As Meacham posits, "The essence of wisdom...lies not in what is known but rather in the manner in which that knowledge is held and in how that knowledge is put to use".⁶⁰ Whether that knowledge relates to a small situation or to a world crisis, whoever holds that knowledge has a responsibility to act appropriately and wisely. This is where wisdom, fairness and responsibility come into play. Knowledge alone has no constraints; but knowledge is not alone when it is applied in the real world. Here humans, as a part of all life, have strong responsibilities towards other life forms and the planet we live on. Thus, since learning creates knowledge, both learning and knowledge include responsibility for application, both pragmatically and ethically.

If we consider deep knowledge, that is, individuals with high expertise in a specific area, one would expect them to have an even higher responsibility in implementing such knowledge. However, with deep knowledge—or perceived deep knowledge—also comes a caution. We are not our knowledge; indeed, the ICALS is a continuous learning function of the human. Since knowledge is context sensitive and situation dependent, it is incomplete, that is, what worked in one situation may not work in another and, as the environment shifts and changes, new knowledge is continuously emerging. Thus as a learner and part of a global network of learners we carry the additional responsibility of social engagement, to enable learning through sharing and taking action for the broader and higher good of our families, friends and civilization and all other life on the planet.

5. The Power of the Unconscious

Power means the ability or capacity to perform or act effectively, as well as the ability or official capacity to exercise control.⁶¹ As we have seen in this study, the unconscious mind plays a significant role in experiential learning. The brain is always processing information, mostly through the unconscious. When we sleep, we often reflect on the previous day's information. Rock⁶² suggests that at night the unconscious evaluates the information that has come in that day for its relative importance and discards the unimportant information while storing what is important. Kandel⁶³ notes that the unconscious never lies, but it can make mistakes. This is not surprising since our unconscious is a part of who we are and exists to aid in our survival. The unconscious influences our thoughts and emotions without our being fully aware of it. This may be a good thing if we watch what we take in, but as Marshall⁶⁴ so eloquently warns,

Beware of the stories you read or tell; subtly, at night. Beneath the waters of consciousness, they are altering your world.

The unconscious processing of incoming information is significantly greater than conscious processing and includes the memory and autonomous systems with the exception of part of working memory. All tacit knowledge is created and stored in the unconscious. It is the source of dreams, intuition, judgment, knowing, and much creativity. By recognizing, respecting, and working with our unconscious we can improve our capacity to learn, think, make decisions, and take effective actions. However, much more research needs to be done in understanding and explaining the operation and influence of the unconscious in learning.

There is considerable interest and dialogue with respect to the existence of the reality of free will. The relations between the conscious Self, the unconscious, and memory and emotion are likely to play a large role in our learning capacity and intuitively it makes sense that these four phenomena will play a central role in any strong theory of adult learning. The connecting link would likely be through the internal relations within a complex adaptive, self-organizing learning system.

In our book, *The Course of Knowledge: A 21st Century Theory*.⁶⁵ we present a deep treatment of tacit knowledge with a chapter dedicated to engaging tacit knowledge. For those interested in exploring the inner realms of tacit, this is a good starting point.

6. The Wisdom of Age

Expanding on our earlier treatment of wisdom, Meacham says that wisdom is not beliefs, attitudes, or sets of facts, rather wisdom is *the attitude taken by individuals toward their beliefs, values and knowledge*. Similarly, Sternberg posits that **“The essence of wisdom is not in what is known but in how that knowledge is held and put to use.”**⁶⁶ According to Goldberg, age can bring along with it wisdom, if the individual so chooses. For the mind/brain to maintain its functional capacity, it must continuously be used throughout life. Ideally, all parts of the brain should be exercised both mentally and physically. While the total neuronal population of the brain may decrease with age, some parts of the brain will continue to create new neurons. Goldberg claims that the patterns that represent significant meaning and value, those patterns referred to as wisdom, tend to remain independent of age.⁶⁷ This, of course, depends on the nature of the mental and physical life lived by the individual. Thus we may conclude that wise individuals are not just lucky individuals, they are the people who *continue to learn and work to develop and apply knowledge for higher-level purposes*.

7. The Drive for Certainty

Drive means to push, propel, or press forward; to supply a motive force or power to cause to function. From an evolutionary perspective, survival can be seen as lifelong learning and a search for certainty in a changing, uncertain, and increasingly complex world. One solution to this challenge is the capacity to understand the environment and develop the capability to anticipate its immediate future. As discussed above, this is one function of learning, namely, to be able to take effective actions for survival. Theories, beliefs, and assumptions are used to build mental models or frames of reference to understand the environment. These then form a framework for new learning as well as for guiding actions. If the beliefs are consistent with the external environment, the believers are rewarded through effective actions and empowerment.

Beliefs may also serve to narrow the field of perceived possibilities that could occur in the external world and, if they are strong, absolute beliefs, they can create the potential illusion of certainty. Unfortunately, such adverse drives for certainty serve to limit learning capacity and seek to maintain the status quo—an almost impossible task in today’s world. There is no risk aversion, there is only risk management. *Risk requires learning, learning creates knowledge, knowledge leads to action, and action needs wisdom. They are all connected in circular spirals that determine the quality of our lives and the existence of our planet.*

8. The Sacredness of Values

One interpretation of sacred means dedicated or devoted exclusively to a single use, purpose, or person.⁶⁸ Although this research does not deal directly with values, they are inherent in all learning and knowledge.⁶⁹ Two of the above guidelines relate responsibility and wisdom to learning. Recall the set of relationships: beliefs influence thinking, which influences understanding, which creates knowledge, which directs actions, which impacts the environment. Actions are related to the environment and two other guidelines immediately call up responsibility and wisdom, which in turn are closely related to values. Wisdom suggests what the objective should be, knowledge says what needs to be done to achieve the objective, and values provide guidance on how it should be achieved and what should not be done, which in a sense leads back to wisdom.

One surprise during this research was the central role that learning and the learning process play in a great many aspects of our lives. We cannot escape the role of—and benefits of—learning in our lives, yet we often ignore it. The questions are: What shall we learn? How should we learn? What can we do with our learning? And what are our responsibilities if we have knowledge? Learning is too important to the future of the world to be left to teachers, schools, industry or governments. It must become the responsibility and the activity of every individual!

9. “The Paradox”

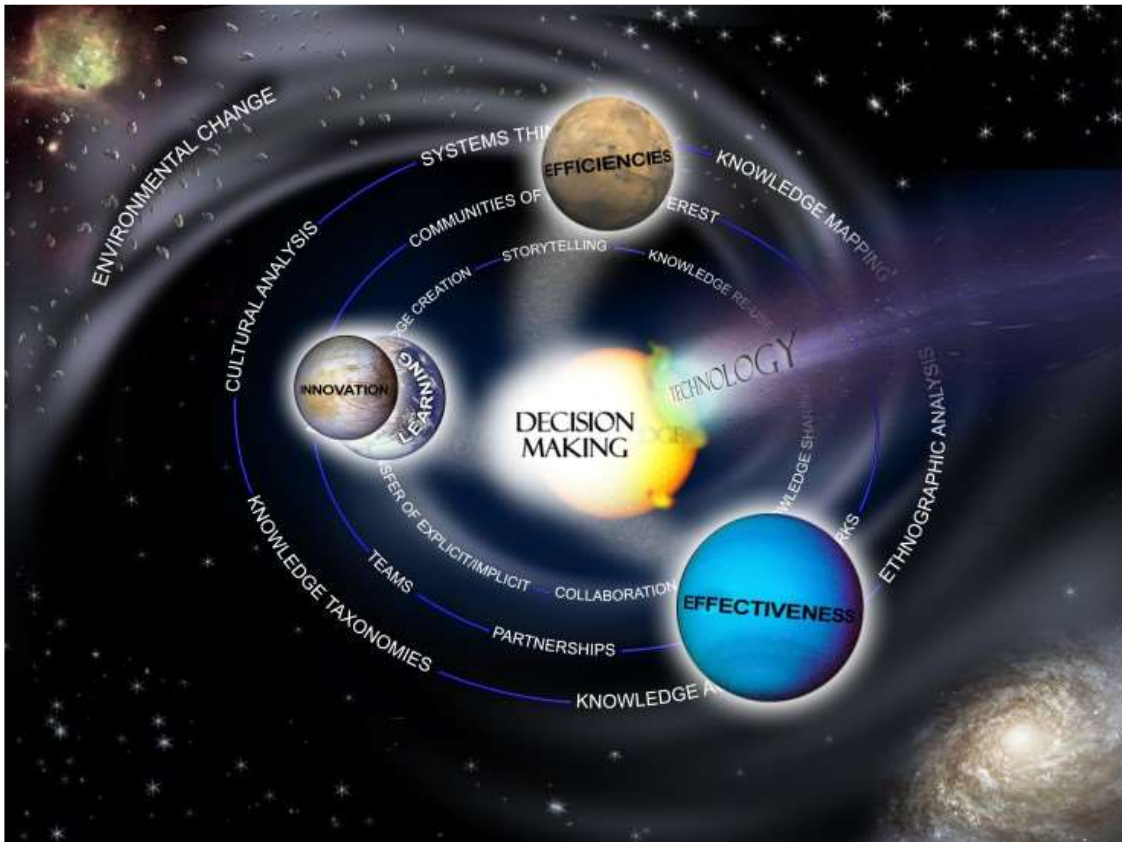
Einstein reminds us that everything should be as simple as possible and no simpler. Mountain Quest Institute, the research location for the authors, posits that before you can simplify something, you had better understand its complexity.⁷⁰ Yet the world continues to change and increase in complexity at a faster and faster rate. So how do we understand the world and its complexity well enough to be able to improve our knowledge and effectiveness of learning? And how can we learn faster and better, thereby keeping up with our world and its increasing complexity? This is the paradox and the challenge of the future! The simplicity is in the patterns—learning, knowledge, responsibility, values and wisdom are our most effective solution. Seeking to embrace complexity by creating deep knowledge and maximizing our own autobiographies, meta-learning, and learning processes as part of our growth and development will help us catch up with exponentially exploding complexity while always keeping in mind the need and importance of wisdom.

Appendix C

KM Learning Objectives⁷¹

1. Have knowledge of the value added by Knowledge Management (KM) to the business proposition, including the return on investment, performance measures, and the ability to develop a business case.
2. Have knowledge of the strategies and processes to transfer explicit and tacit knowledge across time, space, and organizational boundaries, including retrieval of critical archived information enabling ideas to build upon ideas.
3. Have knowledge of state-of-the-art and evolving technology solutions that promote KM, including portals and collaborative and distributed learning technologies.
4. Have knowledge of and the ability to facilitate knowledge creation, sharing, and reuse, including developing partnerships and alliances, designing creative knowledge spaces, and using incentive structures.
5. Have knowledge of learning styles and behaviors, strive for continuous improvement, and be actively engaged in exploring new ideas and concepts.
6. Have working knowledge of state-of-the-art research and implementation strategies for knowledge management, information management, document and records management, and data management. This includes project management of knowledge initiatives and retrieval of critical archived information.
7. Have understanding of the global and economic importance of developing knowledge-based organizations to meet the challenges of the knowledge era.
8. Have the ability to use systems thinking in implementing solutions.
9. Have the ability to design, develop, and sustain communities of interest and practice.
10. Have the ability to create, develop, and sustain the flow of knowledge. This includes understanding the skills needed to leverage virtual teamwork and social networks.
11. Have the ability to perform cultural and ethnographic analyses, develop knowledge taxonomies, facilitate knowledge audits, and perform knowledge mapping and needs assessments.
12. Have the ability to capture, evaluate, and use best-known practices, including the use of storytelling to transfer these best practices.

13. Have the ability to manage change and complex knowledge projects.
14. Have the ability to identify customers and stakeholders and tie organizational goals to the needs and requirements of those customers and stakeholders.



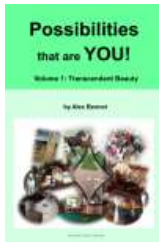
The Federal working group learning objectives covered the breadth of KM

Appendix D

What Does This Mean to Me?

(Core insights from the Possibilities that are YOU! series)

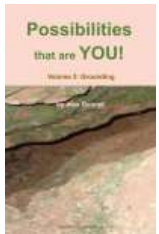
Volume 1: Transcendent Beauty



- Since all of your senses are fully engaged in the experience of beauty, there's no room for negative emotions to hang on. You want to get rid of negative feelings? Recall and reflect on something that is beautiful, or immerse yourself in an experience of beauty.
- Remember that everything you see around you was a thought first. Make sure YOUR thoughts reflect the level of beauty you want in your life!
- Whether an artist or an appreciator, choose to engage in art experiences that make you feel good and bring beauty into your life.
- *Beauty is love made visible.* Remember Plato's ladder of love. The love you feel for another, the beauty you see in that love, will lead you toward the beauty of your soul.
- Your body is YOUR creation, and just as much a product of what you think and feel as what you eat, drink and breath and how you exercise it.
- By creating a beautiful environment and sharing it, we are both expanding our *self* and advocating beauty in the senses of others.
- Through beauty, you can circumvent the tedium of everyday life in an instant, and inject a feeling of appreciation, love and joy into your life!

Got it? Yes? *YOU are beautiful!*

Volume 2: Grounding



- You are an energy being that both generates and receives energy from the environment. Everything you think, feel and do has some level of impact on the larger world!
- Understanding our pivot points, which serve as grounding for other activities, helps us consciously make future choices.
- In the global world of technology, the new order is built on social engagement and ideas. Your ideas, and sharing your ideas, is critical to the advancement of humanity.
- Because of our focus in the physical, material things can be important to us. When materialism advances and becomes primary in an individual, the characteristics of superficiality, exclusion, covetousness, fear, consumption and entitlement emerge, which lead to Narcissism.
- When we physically walk through the grass, lean against a tree, or splash in a running stream, we are energetically connecting to these natural energy sources, replenishing our own system and promoting balance and well-being.

- Energy that is retained in our system, whether physical, mental or emotional, becomes stagnant. Choosing our thoughts and feelings, and using our creative imagination, we can learn how to direct and manage that field as well as its effect on the larger field of which we are a part.
- Reflecting on your own developmental journey in terms of faith, morality and consciousness, how do you feel about it? Are you comfortable with the rate of your development? What are the best steps for you to take next? There is so much you can contribute!

**Get it? *YOU make a difference in this world!*
Stay grounded.**

Volume 3: Engaging Forces



- Choose wisely when engaging forces. When we deliberately create against an activity or force already in play and accomplish our objective, we produce maximum levels of force.
- You cannot control others for long. However, through your choices you can control yourself.
- Acting selfishly produces strong forces that may have both short and long-term consequences.
- A fundamental cause of conflict is separation. How we interact with others plays an important role in the forces that are produced.
- Forces engaged in our lives can be reduced by following a spiritual path.
- The forces of direction, intent, knowledge and knowing can be harnessed to achieve sustainable growth.
- The correlation of forces in an organization can be maximized to support the organizational goals and objectives through the actions of individual employees.

**While forces are a part of our lives, through understanding these forces,
we can choose when, and when not, to engage them.
YOU choose!**

Volume 4: Conscious Compassion



- In order to co-evolve with the larger world, we need to develop a deeper understanding of ourselves and of others.
- The transformation of an individual living an intense inner life leads to spontaneous development of a sensitivity to other's needs.
- Empathy helps us to understand others; compassion moves us to act on that understanding.
- Often, the people we are judging are showing us a part of ourselves that we do not like.

- Strong negative emotions interfere with our ability to be compassionate toward others.
- Selfless service demonstrates conscious compassion.
- Love is contagious. It expands when it is given away.

**Choose compassion.
YOU can make a difference in this world!**

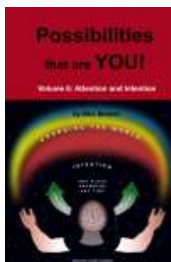
Volume 5: Truth in Context



- Truth is created, not discovered, and it is relative to self. This means that your truth may not be someone else’s truth.
- Truth has a finite life span. Over time, old truths become conceptually and logically wrong.
- There are no absolutes. Locking into an absolute truth “does not allow the continuous and steady development of unconditional love through the acceptance and understanding of ALL things created in the Universe.”
- “At lower levels of consciousness, propositions are accepted as true even when they’re illogical, unfounded, and express tenets neither intellectually provable or practically demonstrable.”
- As lies continue to build, people actually forget prior lies and become comfortable with not hearing the truth.
- Media such as movies have the power to brainwash all ages, negatively and positively.
- The pursuit of science provides the foundation for discovery of ever-larger truths.

**You are a part of this environment, hopefully with heightened awareness of the very real threat of misinformation, disinformation, propaganda and brainwashing.
You’ve got the facts!
What are you going to do about it?**

Volume 6: Attention and Intention



- Whether we are aware of it or not, we are focusing on areas of interest that fit into our patterns of life, and those are both the areas in which we develop a level of expertise, and the areas where events and ideas are attracted into our life.
- The vast amounts of information available has made it more difficult to focus. However, attention to a specific thing, person or event amplifies the contrast in the experience, making it more important (thus, more easily remembered).
- Once you focus on a particular thought, a desire is triggered to turn this information into knowledge upon which to act. So, focus on those things you want in your future.

- Every action we take is preceded by intent, with the expectation of the outcome of that action.
- The intensity of attention and intention impact the ability of consciousness to order or influence the external world. Thus, (1) get engaged with what you want, and (2) co-creating can be powerful!
- Both attention *and* intention are necessary to balance current priorities with future opportunities to guide you in your direction of choice.
- The birthing of intent can either be planned or can happen instantly.

**You are the co-creator of your experience, and attention and intention are human tools to create and navigate this world.
Use them fully!**

Volume 7: Living Virtues for Today



- Beauty, goodness and truth are foundational aspects of your personal journey.
- The creation of good character is a critical step to expanding your consciousness and the larger consciousness of humanity.
- Your actions begin with your thought. Think good thoughts and act on them.
- The core values of an organization define their unique character, who they are and what they strive to become, serving as a common bond of identity. Are your core values consistent with those of your organization?
- Are you able to learn from the younger generation of decision-makers as values shift in response to the changing times?
- Cooperation and collaboration are the highest virtues in the physical focus. Do you nurture and engage these in your life?
- Each person carries the responsibility for acting with good character to the best of their ability. And since good character is a choice and can be developed, this is a LARGE responsibility!

**Through choice and action, we are ever expanding
the good character that we are.
*Thank you for making a difference in this world!***

Volume 8: ME as Co-Creator



- Reality is essentially subjectively unknowable, existing as an image, perception, perspective or belief generated by a person, a group or a society.
- We are all part of an amazing playing field of consciousness. **The requirement of creation is the ability to dream.**
- Consciousness is the Field within which everything—including material reality—exists.
- Because of each person's uniqueness, there is a tension between understanding and misunderstanding that underlies every genuine dialogue.
- As co-creators, we are continuously re-creating ourselves to co-evolve with a changing Universe.
- The self is continuously learning from that which is perceived as its environment, and using this learning to act on reality, which we are simultaneously co-creating.
- The greatest creation in life is that of our SELF.

REMEMBER: The joy of creativity flows through us as effortless as our breath; and each of us uses this flow of creativity to create a unique reality, different from any other individual.

*Even NOW, in this instant,
YOU are co-creating your reality.
WHAT will you create?*

Volume 9: Connections as Patterns



- In the NOW we learn from the patterns of the past in order to better predict the future.
- Our basic instinctual programming can learn, adapt AND evolve! So, some of your “habits” may come from a past relative, AND what you learn in your life CAN be passed on to your offspring! Or, from another viewpoint, there is a collective memory from which we draw from and to which we contribute.
- There are human cognitive systems today that can model a virtual “you” and simulate thinking patterns such that individual strengths can be reinforced and weaknesses mitigated.
- Making new connections, seeing new relationships, and bringing patterns into our conscious stream of thought stimulates the brain.
- Patterns can provide information from which we can gain insights, understanding and meaning.
- Just as we take the events of our lives and create a story of us, whether real or imaginary, we discover and invent the patterns which we seek,

driven by the need for structure, connections and meaning. Our lives are literally a story created by us.

- The patterns and rhythms interwoven into our experiences of life offer clues to our physical, mental, emotional and spiritual expansion.

Gosh, I think I get it! Do YOU get it?

This mind/brain of ours sure is wonderful.

Happy Pattern Exploring!

Happy Pattern Creating!

Volume 10: Knowing



- The unconscious is in service to the conscious mind. It is at the conscious mind level that we develop our intellect and make choices that serve as the framework for our subconscious processing.
- In the human journey of growth there are unending possibilities, and one of those possibilities is the ability to tap at will into the intuitional plane.
- Whether embodied, affective, intuitive or spiritual in nature, tacit knowledge represents the bank account of the self. The larger our deposits, the greater the interest, and the more we are prepared for co-evolving in a changing, uncertain and complex environment
- The five ways of observing represent the front line of cognitive capabilities needed to assist all of us in creative and accurate situational awareness and building a valid understanding of situations.
- The six cognitive processes greatly improve our power to understand the external world.
- The self as an agent of change *takes the emergent deep knowledge and uses it for the dual purpose of our personal learning and growth, and for making changes in the external world.*
- The ability of the self to influence or change the external world is the active part of knowing.

**When we talk about knowledge, we are talking about YOU!
Since you are a verb, not a noun, learning every instant of life,
YOU are creating knowledge every instant of life!
And that knowledge is interwoven with knowing.**

Look within ... YOU Know.

Volume 11: All Things in Balance



- Changing internal and external environments, and the nature of thinking required to meet these dynamic changes, is preparing us for a different future.
- Every structure we see in the Universe is a result of the balancing between opposing forces of Nature.
- Self-balancing concerns important choices. It starts with awareness of what is out of balance.
- When truth becomes foundational in life, then magic happens.
- There is a finite period of time to achieve the rebalancing necessary for human sustainability.
- The greatest barriers to learning and change are egotism and arrogance, which are fundamental difficulties in a rapidly-developing, mentally-focused business environment.
- Balance is not a state of being, but rather continuing, profound choices in a continuous NOW of how we interact with the world.

You can see how important balance is in our lives, from cradle to death bed!
*And now, as a humanity, we are called to balance
 an amazing mental acceleration in the outer world
 with a spiritual flourishing of our inner world. It is time.*

Volume 12: The Emerging Self

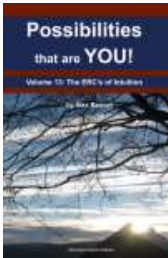


- Our primary personality traits are already imprinted at the time of birth. Self is a learned pattern encompassing a set of physical, mental, emotional and spiritual characteristics and beliefs.
- The initial personality, simple and by nature over-controlling, is designed for the first ten years of life to help ensure survival of the budding human and its developing self. By then, YOU as self need to be making choices!
- Rough and tough and focused on acting in the physical world, the personality is energy-based and able to manipulate energies because it IS energy focused on keeping us alive.
- The emergence of the individual self begins with our senses. *If there is no information coming into the mind then the mind is mindless, that is, it doesn't have the resources—or the truth—to construct itself.*
- Not only is the self creating its life through a conscious understanding of *who and what it is* in relationship with others, but it also understands *who and what it wants to be*, with the aspiration to be anything and the inspiration to be something great.
- Individuation brings the energy and diversity into cooperation and collaboration necessary for innovation and a sustainable global economy.

- We are in continuous two-way interaction with those around us, and our brain is continuously changing in response to that interaction. Who do you interact with?

**Do you get it? Take control of your life!
YOUR choices make a difference in this world of ours.**

Volume 13: The ERC's of Intuition

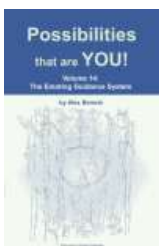


- Deep tacit knowledge is created within our minds, hearts and guts over time through experience, contemplation and unconscious processing such that it becomes a natural part of our being. This means that through the course of life YOU have developed—and continue to develop based on your experiences—tacit knowledge.
- Development of the mental faculties is in service to the intuitive. This means that we need to prepare ourselves in the area of our interest and focus to be able to tap into the intuitional field so that, when we do, **we know how to act on that intuitive insight!**
- Controlled intuition refers to the ability to connect to the intuitional plane at will; it does not insinuate controlling the content of that thought. YOU can learn how to do it.
- One aspect of revealed intuition is mirror neurons, through mental imitation gaining tacit knowledge from another.
- Just as mental thought is in service to the intuitive, earned intuition and revealed intuition work together. Remember, your mind is an associative attractor. Where you set your intention and place your attention is what comes into your reality.
- We have to take responsibility for our thoughts as well as our actions, *for who we are as well as who we are becoming.*
- If we choose, the value of experience and individuation, and what each can contribute to the whole, continues to expand throughout our lives.

So many possibilities!

**What would it be like to have controlled intuition?
How would that change your life?**

Volume 14: The Emoting Guidance System



- By understanding that emotions can be triggered by perceived external events, yet are simultaneously our creation and an act of will, we can set up situations where external events or internal thoughts provide stimuli to trigger desired feelings.
- Emotions exist to alert and protect individuals from harm, and to energize them to action when they have strong feelings or passions. However, emotions are concerned with the *meaning* of the information and not the details.

- There are two possible responses to the danger of stress: either *eliminate the cause* of stress, the situation at hand, or *change your perception* (thought) about the situation.
- Past events, especially those having a large emotional impact, can cause dramatic responses in the NOW.
- Cognitive conveyors act as personal forcing functions to help us move towards our picture of the future.
- “The choice to function on the love-centered motivational frequencies, **where you are designed to function** [emphasis added], is the only choice that brings freedom. It does not limit you to a predetermined script but offers a range of behavior that evokes your fullest potential.”⁷²
- Once we become masters of our emotional guidance system, love and passion weave their way through all elements of our lives

**Perhaps intuitively we all know the power of our emotions.
But sometimes we need a reminder to follow our passions ...**

Let’s bring more love into our lives—and into our world!

Volume 15: Seeking Wisdom

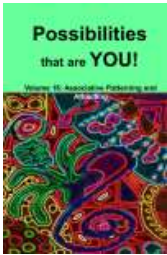


- Wisdom focuses us toward the greater good. As Copthorne Macdonald describes, “acting with the well-being of the whole in mind.”
- “Knowledge can be had by education, but wisdom, which is indispensable to true culture, can be secured only through experience and by men and women who are innately intelligent. Such a people are able to learn from experience; they may become truly wise.”
- Wisdom is the value-laden application of tacit knowledge not only for one’s own benefit, but also for the benefit of others.
- Every situation requires its own picture, that is, its own combination of ideas, interpretations, relationships and actions.
- Spiritual discipline is needed to develop virtue and wisdom in our everyday lives.
- There is an element of wisdom—both the content and the capacity—within each human.
- And instead of a final bullet, I repeat the description of wisdom contributed by John Dalla Costa in *Working Wisdom*: “Wisdom is the combination of knowledge and experience, but it is more than just the sum of these parts. Wisdom involves the mind and the heart, logic and intuition, left brain and right brain, but it is more than either reason, or creativity, or both. Wisdom involves a sense of balance, an equilibrium derived from a strong, pervasive *moral* conviction ... the conviction and guidance provided by the obligations that flow from a profound sense of interdependence. In essence, wisdom grows through the learning of more knowledge, and the practiced experience of day-to-day life—both filtered through a code of moral conviction.”⁷³

**Let's work together on this! Pursue intelligent activity.
Share your amazing learning with others.**

We CAN make a difference in this world!

Volume 16: Associative Patterning and Attracting



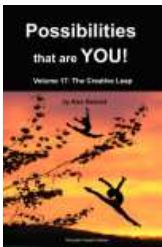
- You and I have the wonderful opportunity of being part of this wonderfully diverse playground of Earth.
- As an associative patterner, the human mind is uniquely prepared to address and respond to an environment that is continuously shifting and changing, and to context-rich situations and opportunities.
- The entire cortex is a memory system, storing sequences of patterns, recalling patterns auto-associatively, and storing patterns in a hierarchy.
- Because memory is recreated each time it is pulled up, it is rarely exactly recreated and often unreliable.
- Thoughts and images have a profound creative and motivating power within human consciousness, with the mind controlling energy and building form.
- Through vibration, there is an attraction of thought to thought, a resonance between the thoughts of self and the thoughts in the Field. We literally live in a sea of thought!
- When reflecting on experiences, the power of positive thinking amplifies learning and changes mindsets from seeing problems to creating opportunities.

We have a miraculous mind/brain that at this point in our development is just beginning to discover itself.

Take a few minutes to think about what you think about.

Are those the things you want in your life?

Volume 17: The Creative Leap



- Creativity is a choice; creativity can be developed. **It is an inherent capability of every mind/brain.**
- Truly creative people keep an open mind, maintain a high curiosity, and investigate many paths toward new possibilities.
- Ordinary people can become extraordinarily creative.
- The experiences to which we expose ourselves and the people with whom we interact directly impact our creativity.
- As the conceiving self extends its reach ever further into both the past and future, so does judgment become less and less dependent on the momentary present.

- A leap is not gradual; you are sensing two different ways of being in the instant, the past and future, and then there is one and the future becomes the present.
- **It is important to remember** that the creative leap *can only occur when thought is focused outward and in service to others.*

Now, take a deep breath, and ... Think. Feel. Create.
The creation of thought is the creative force of the Universe.

Volume 18: Staying on the Path



- Each thought that is definite has a double effect, producing both a floating form and a radiating vibration differing in both density and quality.
- People create harmony through the combined movement of working together such that there is an overall sense of well-being and beauty.
- Giving is an *art* that must be cultivated to achieve *wise* giving, which is helping others to help themselves and others.
- Ultimately, it is human will that determines the shape and direction of the Universe, a Universe that we are actively co-creating.
- Things that don't make sense using systems thinking begin to make sense using symbiotic thinking.
- True happiness cannot be found by searching for it directly; if it comes, it is by the service, love and happiness that we give to others.
- We have right in front of our eyes the Universal model for inclusiveness, *the Earth with whom we live.*

And ... Releasing the illusion of separation does not negate the power of individuation; rather, it elevates its significance.

**Isn't life fascinating ... and there is so much more for us to learn ...
 We are, well, amazing ... there isn't another word for it ...
 with powerful minds, and so much potential!**

What shall we do next?

Volume 19: The Art of Thought Adjusting



- Thoughts are very much an expression of human creativity and imagination.
- Creative imagination involves whole thought, that is, a combination of concepts (higher mental thought) and logic (lower mental thought).
- Since each of us has free will, the nature of our thought adjuster would be to point out possibilities and help us stay on track to be the best that we can be.
- It only takes 17 seconds of focused feeling to shift from one emotional state to another.

- It takes the mind and development of our mental faculties to create knowledge and to use our intuition to effectively act on and with the world.
- We are conflicted between our higher and lower tendencies; we are both “divine in heritage as well as human in inheritance.”
- We are energy beings connected to a larger energy grid, whether you call that a Quantum Field, a Consciousness Field, or a God Field.

**Our intercourse with the Universe is continuous,
and, if we choose, two-way.**

Do you choose?

Volume 20: The Humanism of Humility



- In the expansion of our mental capabilities, we seem to have forgotten the nobler parts of humanism, individually and collectively seeking the potential value and goodness of humanity through rational thought.
- There is a need to overcome our nature and nurture limitations coming out of this era that led to expansion of egos and arrogance.
- There are literally hundreds of texts, and most likely thousands of articles, that frame humility as a virtue.
- Humility requires a grounding *of* self rather than a grounding *in* self.
- Each of us walks a unique path in what we call life; hence, we should exercise humility and accept the fact that we always have something to learn from one another.
- Humility is essential to empathizing with others. Communication without empathy may be useful for transmitting data, but not for reaching minds.
- The condition of humility is demonstrated, not professed.

Remember:

We are simultaneously great and insignificant; small yet important.

What we ALL think and share counts!

Volume 21: The Bifurcation



- A great upheaval is underway, ushering in a new era for humanity.
- Evolution often comes in the face of crisis, where there is a huge pressure that puts us at risk of extinction unless we get really innovative and evolve.
- We are entering an era that seeks connection and integration rather than separation, that embraces synergy rather than conflict.
- Virtue grows from diversity as we recognize the interconnectivity and interdependence of humanity, and move toward an understanding of Oneness and the thoughts and actions that Oneness advances.
- We as humans are confronting in our history the possibility to overcome a fundamental contradiction between our biological constitution and our

social vocation, between our animal constitution and our aim to build civilization.

- We are at an ending, a breaking apart and crumbling of all that we have known, the future that we expected, and are moving toward the unknown.
- With all our marvelous individuation and diversity, it is time to bring the pieces together into a greater whole rather than continuing to break things into separate parts

From whatever frame of reference we choose to look, we are poised for a creative leap at the level of humanity.

Are YOU ready?

Are we as a humanity ready?

Volume 22: Beyond Action



- The mind is the seat of consciousness, enabling awareness of our Self as a knower, as an observer and learner, and as one who takes action.
- In our shifting and dynamic environment, life demands accelerated cycles of learning experiences.
- There are patterns of patterns, and the higher we look at how things relate, moving beyond the particulars of context and situation, the more similarities we can recognize.
- Soul represents the animating principle of human life in terms of thought and action, specifically focused on its moral aspects, the emotional part of human nature, and higher development of the mental faculties.
- You exist, you still exist, you always exist as an individuated expression.
- Synthesis is at play in our everyday life as we tie our life together into a coherent story, a concept of self.
- That plan or thought begins, as soon as made, to draw to itself, in more unseen elements, power to carry itself out, power to materialize itself in physical or visible substance.
- Since energy conserves itself, there is never any waste, merely transitions.

We are existential beings in an experiential world!

Grasp the moment!



“We are called beyond ourselves toward a greater good.”

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About Mountain Quest Institute



The view from the mountain!

MQI is a research, retreat and learning center dedicated to helping individuals achieve personal and professional growth, and helping organizations create and sustain high performance in a rapidly changing, uncertain, and increasingly complex world. MQI has three questions: The Quest for Knowledge, The Quest for Consciousness, and The Quest for Meaning. **MQI is scientific, humanistic and spiritual and finds no contradiction in this combination.**

Mountain Quest Institute, situated four hours from Washington, D.C. in the Monongahela Forest of the Allegheny Mountains, is part of the Mountain Quest complex which includes a Retreat Center, Inn, and the old Farm House, Outbuildings and mountain trails and farmland. See www.mountainquestinn.com The Retreat Center is designed to provide full learning experiences, including hosting training, workshops, retreats and business meetings for professional and executive groups of 25 people or less. The Center includes a 30,000 volume research library, a conference room, community center, 12 themed bedrooms, and a four-story tower with a glass ceiling for enjoying the magnificent view of the valley during the day and the stars at night. Situated on a 400 acre farm, there is a labyrinth, creeks, farm animals and a myriad of wild neighbors. Other neighbors include the Snowshoe Ski Resort, the National Radio Astronomy Observatory and the CASS Railroad.

About the Authors



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Alex Bennet, a Professor at the Bangkok University's Institute for Knowledge and Innovation Southeast Asia, is internationally recognized as an expert in knowledge management and agent for organizational change. Prior to founding the Mountain Quest Institute, she served as the Chief Knowledge Officer and Deputy Chief Information Officer for Enterprise Integration for the U.S. Department of the Navy, and was co-chair of the Federal Knowledge Management Working Group. Dr. Bennet is the recipient of the Distinguished and Superior Public Service Awards from the U.S. government for her work in the Federal Sector. She is a Delta Epsilon Sigma and Golden Key National Honor Society graduate with a Ph.D. in Human and Organizational Systems; degrees in Management for Organizational Effectiveness, Human Development, English and Marketing; and certified in Total Quality Management, System Dynamics and Defense Acquisition Management, as well as a Reiki Master. Alex believes in the **multidimensionality and interconnectedness of humanity as we move out of infancy into full consciousness.**

David Bennet's experience spans many years of service in the Military, Civil Service and Private Industry, including fundamental research in underwater acoustics and nuclear physics, frequent design and facilitation of organizational interventions, and serving as technical director of two major DoD Acquisition programs. Prior to founding the Mountain Quest Institute, Dr. Bennet was CEO, then Chairman of the Board and Chief Knowledge Officer of a professional services firm located in Alexandria, Virginia. He is a Phi Beta Kappa, Sigma Pi Sigma, and Suma Cum Laude graduate of the University of Texas, and holds degrees in Mathematics, Physics, Nuclear Physics, Liberal Arts, Human and Organizational Development, and a Ph.D. in Human Development focused on Neuroscience and adult learning. He lifelong passion has been researching the nexus of Science, the Humanities and Spirituality.



... where the mountains meet the library.

So here it is. This is a book of big ideas, the very ideas that have continuously filled our minds and hearts over the past 20 years, bubbling up and down as we traveled the world, then settling into printed text when we returned home to Mountain Quest where the mountains meet the library, a beautiful valley set in the Allegheny mountains of West Virginia.

Each chapter is, it seems, a chapter of our lives, yet all of it blends together in a magnificent unfolding of thought and learning. How to share 20 years in nine chapters? Impossible, I think. Yet, YOU have been through those 20 years as well, on the same experiential roller coaster that has both titillated and challenged our survival. A global roller coaster that today is still raging through the highest points and most perilous curves.

