

LIFT OTHERS BY
LIFTING YOUR OWN
HEART AND MIND

LIFT: BECOMING A POSITIVE FORCE IN ANY SITUATION

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LIFT

SUMMARY

In their book *Lift*, Ryan W. Quinn and Robert E. Quinn relied upon social science and practical experience to demonstrate how individuals can become a positive force in the lives of others.

The title itself refers to the aerodynamic force known as *lift* that propels a solid body upward through the air despite gravity: a phenomenon which occurs in the flight of airplanes. In their metaphorical depiction of lift, the authors equate gravity with the challenges that can inhibit an individual's ability to positively influence others. Just as lift in the physical world can move a solid body through air, lift- in

one's social and psychological world- can move self and others to greater heights. Because we are social beings, by lifting oneself, Quinn and Quinn postulated, one can lift the hearts and minds of others.

Lift can occur in any context: the boardroom, the classroom, or the family room. The phenomenon of lift occurs when an individual is purpose-centred, internally directed, other-focused, and externally open to feedback. Each of these states counterbalances the others thus all are essential to experience lift.

To achieve the psychological state conducive to lift,

Quinn and Quinn maintain, an individual must consistently pose, and honestly answer, four essential questions- all of which are important. If one question is excluded, the likelihood of an individual experiencing lift is significantly reduced. These questions are identified in chapter one.

*Oh, I have slipped the
surlly bounds of earth
And danced the skies on
laughter-silvered wings;
Sunward I've climbed .
and joined the tumbling
mirth
Of sun-split clouds-and
done a hundred
things..." (p. 1)*

LIFT: A POSITIVE INFLUENCE AND A PSYCHOLOGICAL STATE (CH. 1)

Individuals have the ability to positively affect others. According to Quinn and Quinn, influence is positive when characterized by a number of factors:

- It invites people to be actively involved in achieving a common purpose

- It meets people's psychological needs as depicted in *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs*

- It involves people in ways that reflect their highest held values

- It facilitates adaptability



PSYCHOLOGICAL STATES

A psychological state refers to the current emotional or perceptual condition of our minds- one which is temporary, since, as individuals, we are impacted by our ever changing contexts. These contexts may involve the people with whom we are interacting or the situation in which we find ourselves. A psychological state can be simple or complex in nature. A simple psychological state involves a single emotion such as happiness, exuberance, awe, despair, or anger. Conversely, a complex psychological state involves a number of simultaneously occurring thought and emotional processes. For example, an individual who is offered professional advancement at the expense of a demoted colleague might likely experience a multitude of conflicting emotions: pride at being offered the opportunity for advancement; excitement at the prospect of new chal-

lenge; concern for his or her colleague; and guilt for the acceptance of the position.

As Quinn and Quinn purport, the study of psychological states is significant because humans are relational beings. Our psychological states are symbiotically affected by our interaction with others. That is, just as we are influenced by the behaviour, emotions, or perceptions of others, so too are others impacted by our own actions and emotions.

How do our psychological states influence others?

Facial expressions, body language, and tone of voice impact the way people interpret and respond to situations.

People often unconsciously emulate, and then adopt, the feelings of people with whom they are surrounded.

Our own psychological states often impact how

we respond to situations- a reaction which influences others.

Actions which vary from the norm, and which generate different yet positive results, often facilitate the process of reflection.

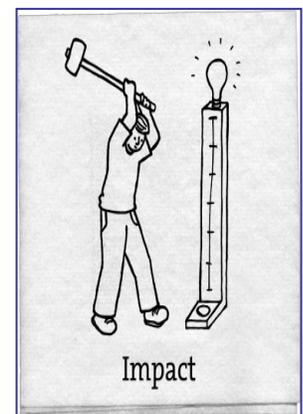
As Quinn and Quinn expressed, “We are constantly influencing and being influenced by others, and the state we are in affects the quality of influence that flows between and among us” (p. 10). When in a specific psychological state that positively influences others, we are in the state of *lift*. The phenomenon of lift occurs when an individual is purpose-centred, internally directed, other-focused, and externally open to new responses.

Four Lift Questions

- What result do I want to create?
- What would my story be if I were living the values I expect of others?



“Our psychological states are a sum of who we are in a given moment as we play out the stories of our lives” (p. 10).



What type of impact do you have on others?

LIFT QUESTIONS CONTINUED

-How do others feel about the situation?

-What are three strategies I could use to accomplish my purpose?

When people ask themselves these questions, they tend to move away from automatic responses borne of comfort and habit and move toward more reflective responses contributing to lift.



Living our Values

L = Legacy...What results do I want to create?

I = If...What would my story be if I were living the values I expect of others?

F = Feelings...How do others feel about this situation?

T = Tactics... What strategies could I use to accomplish my purpose?

THE SCIENCE, HISTORY, AND METAPHOR OF LIFT (CH. 2)

An organization’s effectiveness can be understood according to how evenly distributed its strategies and actions exist within the four quadrants of Robert E. Quinn’s Competing-Values Framework (CVF). As Figure 1 illustrates, the vertical line gauges the flexibility or stability of an organization’s structure. The horizontal line depicts the degree to which an organization focuses on internal or external issues.

In Quinn’s CVF, the following four quadrants tend to compete with one another: competitiveness, collaboration, control, and creativity.

Four Lenses on Organizational Effectiveness

1. Competitive Lens: Effec-

tiveness determined by the organization’s productivity (criteria- profit, goal attainment, and efficiency)

2. Collaborative Lens: Effectiveness determined by the organization’s degree of collaboration and development (criteria- morale, quality, and training)

3. Control Lens: Effectiveness determined by the organization’s degree of reliability and accountability (criteria- use of information, stability, and control)

4. Creativity Lens: Effectiveness determined by the organization’s adaptability and innovation (criteria- adaptation, growth, and utilization)

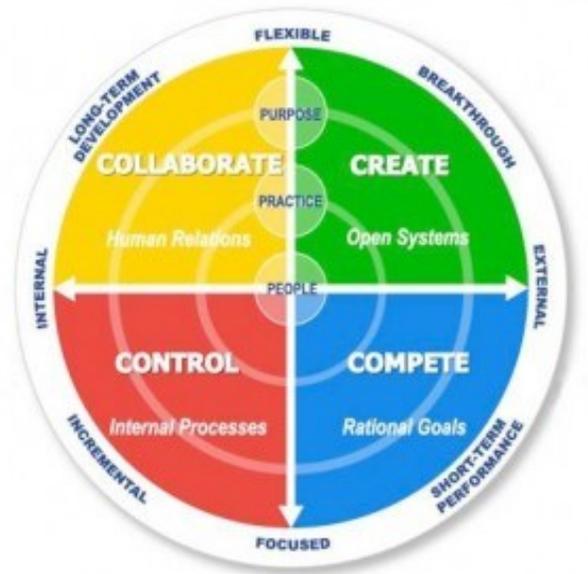
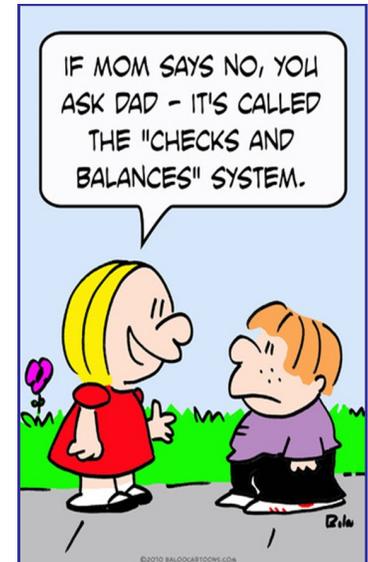


Figure 1. Competing - Values Framework for Organizational Effectiveness

FOUR PSYCHOLOGICAL STATES REQUIRED FOR LIFT

- 1. Other-Focused (Collaboration):**
Understanding of the legitimacy of others' thoughts & feelings
- 2. Internally Directed (Control):**
Living our values; closing the integrity gap between our beliefs & our actions
- 3. Externally Open (Creativity)**
Adapting to feedback or to change
- 4. Purpose –Centered (Competitiveness):**
Desiring , planning, and creating extraordinary results

All four psychological states are required if one is to exert a positive influence on others. The values that fall on opposite sides of the CVF are competing ones. "The *externally open* characteristic is the opposite of the *internally directed* characteristic, and the *results-centered* characteristic is the opposite of the *other-focused* characteristic" (p. 40). However, these are positives opposites: each trait is virtuous. The competing trait balances its positive opposite so that neither characteristic consumes the other. For example, we keep our own purpose centered desires in check by our concern and empathy for others. In this way, an omission of any one trait can diminish the positivity of an individual's influence thus we must endeavor to assume all four traits.



SEEKING COMFORT AND DWELLING ON PROBLEMS (CH. 3)

According to Quinn and Quinn, people tend to conduct their lives in a comfort-centered manner. This approach is one that is based upon habit and automatism. People respond to situations—often unconsciously— as they have done so in the past. However, when a challenge or change occurs, people often transition to a problem-solving mind-set. Their effort and energy focuses upon restoring the situation to what it was prior to the disruption. While the authors conceded that a problem –solving approach

may propel people forward, the energy that it generates is not enough to create lift.

When disrupted expectations create a gap between the situation people expect and the one with which they are faced, we often label the gap as a problem. Our energy is expended on attempting to restore the situation to the expected state. However, the expected state – due to change or circumstance— may no longer be appropriate or realistic. Our efforts, then, are thwarted and our energy depleted. Granted, when it is desirable, ethical, and feasible to restore a situation to its previous state, doing so is

appropriate. In other cases, the authors propose it is more productive to change our expectations, to create a new purpose than it is to force the world to conform to our old expectations.

Certainly this is not an easy feat. In fact, many people do not even realize that their expectations might be inappropriate or preconceived. Additionally, people tend to search for evidence that supports their beliefs and behaviour thus a change, in their minds, is not warranted.

Because the labels that we use determine how we perceive

and respond to situations, Quinn and Quinn advocate transitioning from a problem-solving approach to a purpose finding methodology when addressing situations of change or challenge.

"If the expectations we have created or learned from past experience are not appropriate, either because we developed inappropriate ones to begin with or because the situation has changed, it is difficult, if not impossible, for us to harness lift without changing those expectations" (p. 43).

BECOMING PURPOSE CENTERED (CH.4)

A Purpose Centered State Involves

- ◆ Envisioning and pursuing extraordinary results
- ◆ Determining goals for oneself
- ◆ Creating for the purpose of achievement
- ◆ Challenging oneself and others
- ◆ Living one’s values
- ◆ Energetically pursuing one’s subjective goals

A Purpose Centered State Does Not Involve

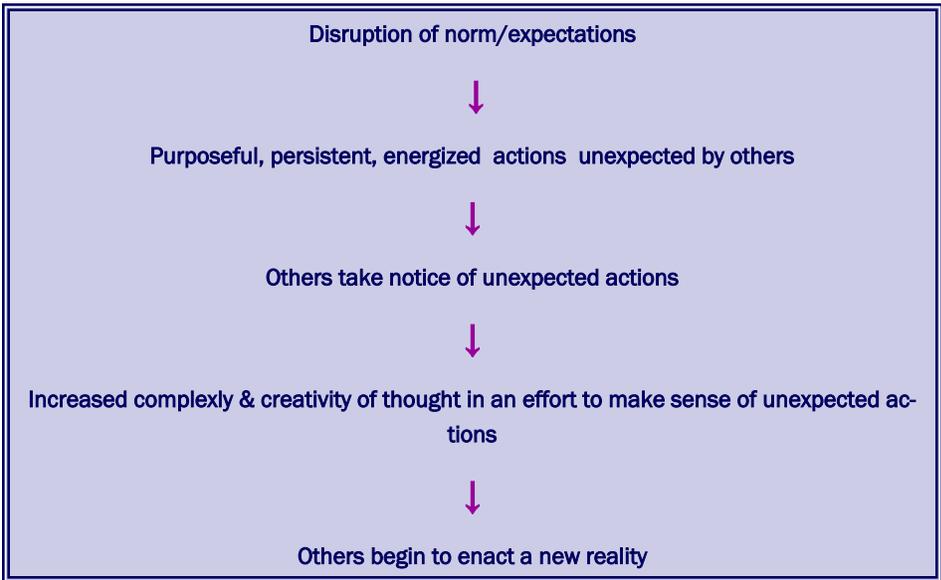
- ◆ Succumbing to the constraints of expectations
- ◆ Accepting the goals of others as our own
- ◆ Complying for the purpose of avoiding punitive measures
- ◆ Threatening oneself or others
- ◆ Abandoning one’s values
- ◆ Dutifully fulfilling objective goals

What results do I want to create?

“When people are purpose centered, they envision and pursue extraordinary results that are not constrained by previous expectations or by the expectations they receive from others. The results they pursue are energizing because they are self-chosen, challenging, and constructive” (p. 56).

INFLUENCE THROUGH ENACTMENT

As Figure 2 depicts, **enactment** is the process of influencing others by taking purposeful, self-determined actions to address change or challenge: actions which are unexpected by others. These actions, at least in part, create a situation which prompts others to take notice and, ultimately, to formulate new expectations of their own in an effort to make sense of the current reality.



“When people see an individual take unexpected, energized, focused and persistent actions, they are likely to question some of their own expectations, think more complexly, adopt some of the ideas of the individual taking unexpected action, and perhaps even offer ideas that build on and contribute to that individual’s actions” (p. 67).

Figure 2. The Process of Enactment

INFLUENCE THROUGH CONTAGION

People tend to experience, often unconsciously, the feelings of those who surround them. This phenomenon is known as **emotional contagion**: a term coined by Hatfield, Cacioppo, and Rapson (p. 67).

Facial Expressions + Body Language + Tone of Voice \approx Emotional Contagion

As Quinn and Quinn articulated, initially we mimic others' expressions, and then we begin to experience the emotions generally associated with those expressions. Emotional contagion can be positive or negative.

NEGATIVE EMOTIONAL CONTAGION



Energy Depletion

Energy Networks

POSITIVE EMOTIONAL CONTAGION

In Frederickson and Branigan's study (as cited in Quinn & Quinn, 2009), people with positive emotions tended to have more energy and possibilities open to them than those with negative or indifferent perspectives. Additionally, positive emotions, the study suggested, facilitated individuals in the creation of a greater bank of resources that they could frequently utilize in actualizing their purpose-centered states. The authors synthesized that "because emotions are contagious, one energized person can help other people to think more broadly, act more creatively," and generate more resources (p. 71). Consequently, people are more likely to pursue their desired results.

INFLUENCE THROUGH RESULTS

Legitimacy & Feasibility

- ◆ The cumulative effect of little successes enhances the legitimacy of one’s influence
- ◆ Tangible results increase the feasibility of creating something extraordinary
- ◆ Success is energizing

Limits of Possibility

- ◆ Must honestly acknowledge desired result
- ◆ Frees one from the weight of incorrect expectations or unattainable objectives
- ◆ Change desired result or realize that the result is, indeed, possible

Limits of Positivity

- ◆ Some extraordinary results can, in fact, be negative
- ◆ Results less likely to be negative if one maintains a balance between four CVF quadrants
- ◆ Purpose-centered, internally directed, other-focused, and externally open

“I tend to act with the most integrity when I question my integrity” (p. 97).



FALLING SHORT ON OUR VALUES AND NOT REALIZING IT (CH. 5)

People live in a manner inconsistent with their core values, such as compassion, helpfulness, honesty, and self-restraint, when they are directed predominantly by external contexts. Figure 3 indicates a number of external factors which can potentially inhibit people from living their values.

Authority	Diffused Responsibility	Overwhelming Contexts	Automaticity	Justification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Obedience to authority a natural tendency ◆ Desire to comply (positive reinforcement) & fear of punitive measures (negative reinforcement) ◆ Milgram’s <i>Obedience to Authority</i> experiment (1961) ◆ All participants obeyed authority and inflicted what they perceived as pain on others ◆ 65% of participants did so to the most extreme of levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The greater the number of people who might provide assistance, the lesser the sense of responsibility for taking action ◆ The greater the number of people involved, the greater one’s uncertainty about taking appropriate action thus contributing to inactivity ◆ Darley and Latane’s <i>Bystander Intervention study</i> (1968) ◆ Participants who believed others were able to help responded the least quickly, if at all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The surrounding circumstances of the situation ◆ Time constraints, looming deadlines, cultural stereotypes, adherence to agenda ◆ Context overwhelms values ◆ Shih, Pittinsky, and Ambady’s <i>Stereotype Susceptibility study</i> (1999) ◆ Respondents’ scores on a math test varied according to the stereotyped groups in which they were placed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ We react automatically to cues in our environment without explicit thought ◆ If our past experiences and current contexts prime us to act in ways consistent with our values, we are apt to do so ◆ The opposite is also true ◆ Bargh (as cited in Quinn & Quinn, 2009) proposed 95% of our thoughts & actions are caused by automatic, unconscious thought processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Process of rationalization to justify behaviour when two simultaneous and incompatible beliefs exist within an individual or within a social network ◆ Cognitive dissonance ensues ◆ To quell the discomfort of cognitive dissonance, self & other justification occurs ◆ Eventually justifiers believe that their rationalizations are true

Figure 3. External Factors that Influence Behaviour

BECOMING INTERNALLY DIRECTED (CH. 6)

Internal direction involves refraining from automatic responses, from justifications, and moving toward the conscious application of responses that reflect our values. Justifications are types of stories. They explain why we did what we did: they prevent us from acting in ways consistent with our values. To better live our values, we should begin to utilize two different types of stories referred to as implementation intentions and reasons. The degree to which a new story will help us live our values is dependent upon the integrity, the truthfulness of the story itself.

What would my story be if I were living the values I expect of others?

This question, if answered honestly, can assist us in three different ways to live our values:

1. Helps identify our core values
2. Helps critique how well we are living our values
3. Helps create a new story with a plot, moral, and truth

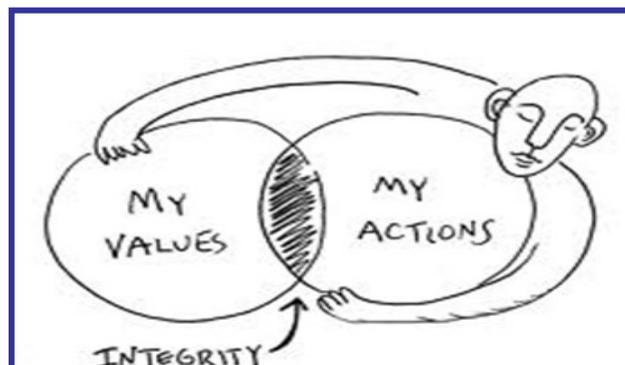
MOMENTS OF DIGNITY

“Dignity occurs in moments when people exercise their distinctively human capacity to live their highest values” (p. 110). Such moments are a feature of internally directed behaviour when individuals are acting free from the restraints of self-justification.

Contributing Factors

- ⇒ Strength of character (wisdom, courage, knowledge, humanity, justice & temperance)
- ⇒ Self-regulation (consciously inhibiting automatic responses)
- ⇒ Congruence (consistency between values & actions)

Implementation Intentions	Reasons
↕	↕
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Direct behaviour - What we plan to do (If...then...) - Refrain from automatic responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Motivate behaviour - Why we should act in a certain way - Foster consistency with values



Impact on Self & Other

- ⇒ Elevation (virtuous action may inspire others to do the same)
- ⇒ Calmness (comfort derived when we have nothing to hide or defend)
- ⇒ Honesty (admitting mistakes strengthens us, frees us, and increases our dignity)
- ⇒ Effectiveness (more energy can be expended on creative and extraordinary results)

SEEING OTHERS AS OBJECTS (CH. 7)

Two Psychological States with Regard to Others

Self-Focused	Other- Focused
↓	↓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Others as objects - Helping or preventing us from achieving our goals - “I” perspective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Others as valued human beings - Mutual empathy - “You” or “Thou” perspective

Empathy

- ⇒ Feeling the emotions of others which makes us capable of caring for them as deserving human beings
- ⇒ Exploring alternate points of view
- ⇒ “I-Thou” inseparable

Emotional Invitations

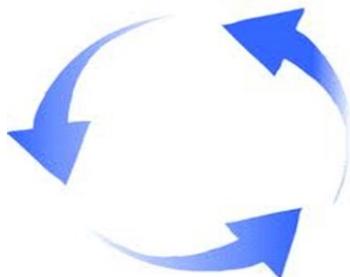
Through our body language, facial expressions, and tone of voice we offer –often unconsciously– emotional invitations for others to act empathically. However, our mental models constructed from past experiences and current contexts frequently determine how we choose to respond to empathic invitations. Despite our impulse to act empathically, we sometimes fail to accept such invitations.

Impact of Rejecting Emotional Invitations

- ⇒ Self-betrayal (lost opportunity to be other-focused)
- ⇒ Justifications which make us victims
- ⇒ Decrease in self-determination
- ⇒ Anguished relationships
- ⇒ Unconscious collusion in which we become conspirators in our own victimization, indifference, or selfishness

Fluid Dynamics

As social beings, we are always, in some capacity, influencing others and, in turn, being influenced by them. Often the pattern of interaction and reaction becomes cyclical. Our emotional responses tend to be reciprocated.



“If we do not acknowledge that we are capable of choice and responsible for our actions, then we are likely to continue thinking of ourselves as victims and to remain in our self-focused state” (p. 134).

Other- Focused

BECOMING OTHER-FOCUSED (CH. 8)**Seeing Humanity in Others**

Quinn and Quinn suggested that becoming other-focused requires individuals to consciously search for the humanity in others; to deconstruct automatic responses and justifications; and to truly listen to the stories of others. Granted, this takes time, just as the creation of automatic responses and justifications evolved over a period of time.

Figure 4 conveys the authors' strategies for enabling individuals to see the humanity of others; that is, to possess greater empathy.

Strategies for Humanizing Others

- ◆ Imagine how others might feel
- ◆ Listen to their stories
- ◆ Consider the perspective of stakeholders
- ◆ Deflate our own perceived virtues and the perceived vices of others
- ◆ Spend time with people who empathize with you
- ◆ Learn by example
- ◆ Refrain from placing blame— makes us victims and reduces our influence
- ◆ Frequently inquire , “What would my story be if I were living the values I expect of others?”

Figure 4. Humanizing Others

Questions About an Other-Focused State

1. Are some people undeserving of empathy or deserving of blame?

- ◆ Possibly yet the energy consumed by blaming others does little to improve the situation and , in fact, disempowers stakeholders

2. Might the constant empathic involvement of stakeholders' perspectives require an individual to sacrifice personal pursuits of extraordinary results?

- ◆ Possibly yet stakeholders must be willing to focus on commonalities rather than differences. Collaborative resources increases the likelihood of success.

“In our meetings , and deliberations, we can reach out and invite those we have excluded. We can recognize that no one person or leader has the answer, that we need everybody’s creativity to find our way...We can act from the certainty that most people want to care about others and invite them to step forward with their compassion. We can realize that ‘you can’t hate someone whose story you know’” (Wheatley, 2007, p. 57).

Benefits of an Other-Focused State

- Stakeholder rapport— moving together in synchronicity
- Increased integrity and resiliency as a result of feeling respected and secure
- Increased experimentation & innovation— a willingness to explore with people who you might not typically do so
- Increased creativity derived from multiple perspectives

Often those who resist feedback are ones who believe their ability is fixed; that they cannot achieve greater results. When evaluation is ability rather than effort based, individuals tend to fear additional feedback which may question their previously demonstrated ability. As a result, such subsequent feedback may be rejected. The *Icarus Paradox* suggests that when specific competencies are identified as critical to success., these same competencies can be overemphasized at the expense of creativity, innovation., effort, and moral fortitude. Quinn and Quinn postulated that while competencies should be acknowledged and praised, the effort behind such endeavors should be equally addressed to facilitate receptiveness of feedback and to foster a desire for continuous growth. For these reasons, the authors advocated outcome based feedback.

Outcome Based	Performance Based
↕	↕
- Direct behaviour	- Evaluate behaviour
- Focus on results	- Focus on ability
- Focus on growth	-Focus on competence
- Internally open	- Internally closed
* *Quinn and Quinn identified outcome based feedback as that which fosters continuous organizational growth as opposed to performance based feedback which is egocentric in nature.	

Effects of Inability to Accept Feedback

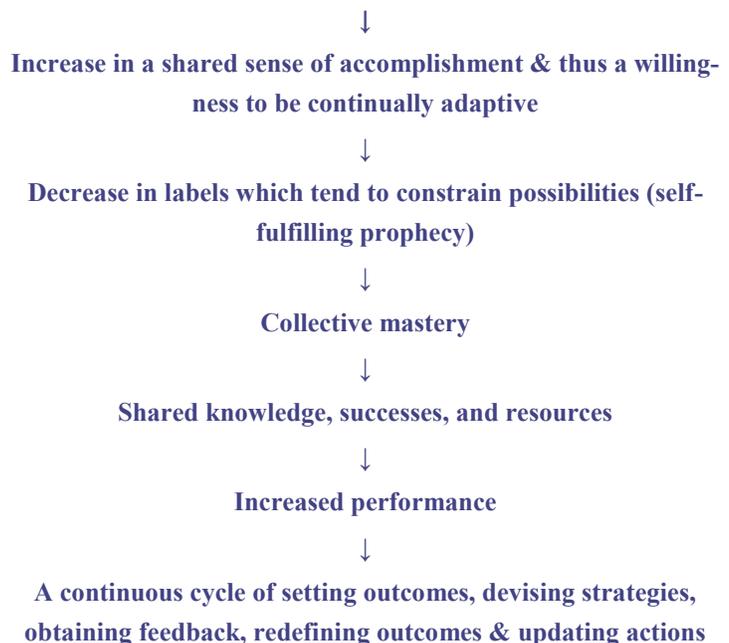
- ◆ Reluctance to accept challenges
- ◆ Lowered expectations
- ◆ Stagnant aspirations
- ◆ Reduced expectations of self and others
- ◆ Limited growth



BECOMING EXTERNALLY OPEN (CH. 10)

- ◆ Means believing that change, progress, or improvement is possible
- ◆ Involves a receptiveness to feedback which can assist us in improving our abilities
- ◆ Focuses upon achieving outcomes rather than evaluating performance
- ◆ Increases confidence and willingness to try new things
- ◆ Contributes to the creation of strategies derived from feedback (data driven rather than personally driven)
- ◆ Requires, at times, the real time improvisation of strategies based upon unfolding feedback –that which is still purpose driven

Effects of an Externally Open State



Exclusion of one characteristic of lift can decrease the likelihood or intensity of our positive influence. What is required is an integration of all competing values of Quinn and Quinn's CVF. Likewise, all four questions should be considered, internalized, and acted upon if lift is to be achieved. Each value, each question counter balances its positive opposite thus acting as a stabilizing force on the others. Persistently applied, individuals can draw attention to their virtuous actions which, in turn, tend to encourage others to reflect upon these actions and act in a similar manner.

When all four CVF realms and questions are persistently employed by leaders, the results can be bountiful. Individuals may witness a leader's willingness to try something new - despite the risk of failure. Even if the leader fails, the message is strong: the environment is safe and secure—one which encourages creative and innovative strategies. Occasionally, as Quinn and Quinn conceded, the leader, despite his or her intentions, has an unintentional negative impact on stakeholders. According to the authors, this is less likely to occur when all four states of CVF co-exist. Quinn and Quinn suggested that more research is required in this area.

CRITIQUE

Quinn and Quinn endeavored to convince readers that individuals can become positive forces in any situation--if a number of fundamental values direct behaviour. Essentially, if individuals identify their desired results and guiding values, reflect upon them, empathically consider the perspective of others, and collaboratively devise strategies to accomplish desired outcomes which align with their core values, there is a greater likelihood of progression. In this way, individuals can be a positive influence on self and others.

Initially, I found the authors' message rather repetitive. Each chapter began with a summary of previously stated information; each chapter ended with a prelude of forthcoming information. Eventually, I realized that the repetition in content was purposeful. Each repetition of central concept reinforced the notion that all four portions of CVF must be continuously implemented regardless of situational context. Thus the repetition in content purposefully reflected the reciprocal and cyclical nature of influence.

To develop their thesis, Quinn and Quinn relied upon a variety of data sources which strengthened their argument – sources including scientific, sociological, and applied data. Such varied sources most certainly increased the credibility of their thesis. In addition, the clear and straightforward language utilized by Quinn and Quinn reflected their belief that our actions should also be clear and forthright. The combined impact of empirical data and purposeful language strengthened Quinn and Quinn's argument.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How might Quinn and Quinn's four essential questions, if pursued, provide balance in the life of self and others?
2. Discuss potential drawbacks to engaging in an other-focused state. How might these concerns be altered to reflect a results-oriented, positive perspective?
3. How do the components of CVF balance one another? Discuss a real life situation.
4. How can the continuous use of Quinn and Quinn's four essential questions contribute to lift?
5. Is lift possible, as Quinn and Quinn attested, in any situation?

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