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Presidential Address

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I began to reflect on my year of Presidency and thought I would reach out to our new President, President Obama, and share with him what I thought would be common concerns and perhaps ask for some help. So, I wrote:

*Dear President Obama,
We, at the Eastern Academy of Management, are a small professional organization with a 46-year history, and like the nation, we too are facing significant economic challenges. I appreciate your efforts to reach out and help many organizations and I was wondering if we could receive some assistance.*

I got an e-mail saying:
*Dear President of EAM,
Please send us a list of your troubled assets immediately.*

So, I sent him my resume, with a list of my problems, essentially saying, “Look at me and *I’m* the President – we’re in trouble!”

The e-mail reply was quick; it said:
*Dear President of EAM,
I regret to inform you that you do not qualify as a troubled asset. You are just a liability!*

It went on to say:
Therefore, you cannot receive assistance under the Troubled Asset Relief Program or TARP. However, we are discussing possibly launching a Business Academics Relief Fund.

Right now my head is saying to my heart – FOCUS!

My heart wants to go to San Francisco!

Facing the future with heart and mind is a daunting challenge because it requires synthesis, integration, coherence, and holism. In order to address this challenge, it is instructive to first look back at a history of separation, dichotomization, disaggregation, and reductionism. We have seen a deliberate separation of craftsmanship from labor, emotion from rationality, intuition from planning,



image from reality, economic needs from social and psychological needs, and the list goes on. This systematic pattern of dichotomies has legitimized and normalized the idea of trade offs, making choices of one over the other. It is no surprise then that we see a clear meta-pattern of large systems colliding: economic systems with ecological systems and political systems with social systems, to name just a few.

However, we must acknowledge that thought leaders have been calling for a reintegration of heart and mind for some time. Frank Lloyd Wright (Cited in Schwartz, 2007, 67) said:

The heart is the first feature of working minds.

There is also the idea that heart signifies our purest and most powerful manifestation of being. The Chandogya Upanishad (3.13.7) (Cited in Muller, 1900, 47) says:

That light which shines above this heaven, higher than all, higher than everything in the highest world, beyond which there are no other worlds that is the same light which is within man.

Over the past 80 years, management scholars have also evolved through many phases of realization that integration and coherence are essential to sustaining organizations that are fulfilled and complete. These theories range from human relations to more recent developments of emotional intelligence, multiple intelligences, stakeholder perspective, conscious capitalism, and eco-centeredness.

John Maynard Keynes had even predicted that by now we would have resolved our imbalances. He wrote (Cited in Andrews, 2001, 236),

The day isn't far off when the economic problem will take the back seat where it belongs, and the heart and head will be occupied or reoccupied, by our real problems of life and of human relations, of creation and behavior and religion.

Yet, we seem to be mired in our current state of *Koyaanisqatsi* (Ratical, 2009, ¶ 1), which translates to “life out of balance” in the Hopi language.¹

Why? Has our single-minded focus on mobilizing every economic resource caused us to be disconnected from our past, our present, and our future? Many indigenous people, including some Native-Americans, have made decisions consistent with stewardship of their lands and people, without the benefits of modern education. They know who their ancestors were going back centuries and they explicitly consider the impact of their actions and lives seven generations hence (Seventh Generation

Fund, 2009, ¶ 3), a process called the seventh generation principle.

If we do not know who our ancestors are, can we feel connected to future generations?

The coming together of heart and mind has been observed in a phenomenon that psychologists call *Flow* (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) – a completely joyous experience of performance at the highest level that renders space and time meaningless for the person experiencing it. Athletes, who are the best in the world and dominate their sport, have reported experiences where their mind is very calm and it's as though they are watching themselves play perfectly and effortlessly while time stands still. The athlete is in the zone. Virtuoso musicians also report similar experiences. When a famous Indian classical musician was asked how he played so masterfully, he explained that it was the music playing through him rather than him playing the music.

Our community of scholars and teachers, here at EAM, has a long and rich tradition of diverse inquiry in areas such as values, beliefs, emotions and spirituality in the workplace along with planning, strategy, and technology. In other words we have been seeking the synthesis of heart and mind for as long as I can remember and I'm proud to be part of such a tradition. The challenge for us is to educate our students, the future generations of stewards, so that despite being buffeted by forces of separation, de-integration, and one-dimensional metrics of performance, they will remain centered, with heart and mind in harmony, and achieve that elusive *Flow* where the present and future unfold in perfect unison.

I will end with a vivid illustration of the immense energy of the coherent and holistic. William A. Tiller (1997, 196) in *Science and Human Transformation: Subtle Energies, Intentionality and Consciousness*, says,

The shift from incoherence to coherence can bring dramatic effects: if one could cohere all the photons coming out of a 60 watt light bulb, the energy density at the surface of the bulb would be greater than that at the surface of the sun.

Thank You

Note

¹In Hopi cosmology, this noun corresponds to the fourth world of seven worlds. In the tradition, the first three worlds were destroyed due to humans straying too far from the path of connectedness to the earth. The term is a warning of possible destruction of the fourth world unless humans reconnect.



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