

QUANTUM PHYSICS, LEADERSHIP AND BUILDING COMMUNITY

A Precis...

Co-Creating our Environments

"Without a clear sense of who they are, and what they are trying to accomplish, organizations get tossed and turned by shifts in their environment. No person or organization can be an effective co-creator with its environment without clarity about who it is intending to become (Wheatley 1999, p. 39".

"There is no objective reality; the environment we experience does not exist "out there". It is co-created through our acts of observation, what we choose to notice and worry about. If we truly embraced this sensibility in our organizational life, we would no longer waste time arguing about the "objective" features of the environment. Conflicts about what's true and false would disappear in the exploration of multiple perceptions. We need to move away from arguing about who's right and who's wrong, and instead focus our concerns on issues of effectiveness, on reflective questions of what happened, and what actions might have served us better. We need to stop arguing about truth and get on with figuring what works best" (Weick 1979, 152, 168-69).

Power as Energy and Meaningful Work

"Power in organizations is the capacity generated by relationships. It is an energy that comes into existence through relationships...Do people know how to listen and speak to each other? To work well with diverse members? Do people have free access to one another throughout the organization? Are they trusted with open information? Do organizational values bring them together or keep them apart? Is collaboration truly honored? Can people speak truthfully to one another?: (Wheatley 1999, p. 39)

"What is it that would be so attractive that it would hold our behaviour within a boundary and keep us from wandering into formlessness? It seems clear to me now that values create such attractors [referring to the strange attractors that are part of quantum physics].

"But by far, the most powerful force of attraction in organizations and in our individual lives is *meaning*. It only takes a simple but powerful question: "What called you here? What were you dreaming you might accomplish when you first came to work here?" Most people come to their organizations with a desire to do something meaningful, to contribute and serve" (Wheatley 1999, p. 132).

Everybody needs "an inner belief that they are in some sense meant to be here, that you can leave the world a little different in a small way (Handy in Hesselbein and Cohen 1999, 130).

"Because power is energy, it needs to flow through organization; it cannot be bounded or designated to certain functions or levels. What gives power its charge, positive or negative, is the nature of the relationship" (Wheatley 1999, p. 39).

"We would do well to ponder the realization that love is the most potent source of power" (Wheatley 1999, p. 40).

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"In motivation theory, attention is shifting from the use of external rewards to an appreciation for the intrinsic motivators that give us great energy. We are refocusing on the deep longings we have for community, meaning, dignity, purpose and love in our organizational lives" (Wheatley 1999, p. 14).

Many scientists now work with the concept of fields - invisible forces that occupy space and influence behaviour. Organizational behaviour is influenced by the invisible. Space is never empty. It is filled with harmonious voices, a song rises that is strong and potent. It is filled with conflict, the dissonance drive us away and we don't want to be there" (Wheatley 1999, p. 15, 56, 57).

"Leadership is best thought of as a behaviour, not a role. We always need leaders, but this need can be satisfied by many different people, depending upon the context" (Janov, 1994).

At the beginning of the twentieth century, discoveries of a strange world at the subatomic level could not be explained by Newtonian laws, and the path was open for new ways of comprehending the universe...Quantum imagery challenges so many of our basic assumptions, including our understanding of relationships, connectedness, prediction and control" (Wheatley 1999, p. 33).

"The quantum world is dynamic patterns continually changing into one another - the continuous dance of energy" (Capra 1983, 91).

"The quantum world is a vast porridge of being where nothing is fixed or measurable" (Zohar 1990, 27).

"In the quantum world, relationships are not just interesting; to many physicists, they are all there is to reality" (Wheatley 1999, p. 34)

"This [quantum] world is rich and complex. The pattern that connects suggests that we need to stop teaching facts - the things of knowledge - and focus, instead, on relationships as the basis for all definitions" (Bateson 1980).

"In the quantum world, relationship is the key determiner of everything" (Wheatley 1999, p. 11)

"None of us exists independent of our relationships with others. Different settings and people evoke some qualities from us and leave others dormant. In each of these relationships, we are different, new in some way. Each of us is a different person in different places. This doesn't makes us unauthentic; it merely makes us quantum. Not only are we fuzzy; the whole universe is [fuzzy]" (Wheatley 1999, p. 35, 36).

"Elementary matter is inherently two-faced - it possess two very different identities. Matter can show up as particles - specific points in space; or it can show up as waves - energy dispersed over a finite area.

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Matter's total identity (known as a wave packet) includes the potential for both forms - particles and waves" (Wheatley 1999, 36).

No form of measurement is neutral

One major principle of quantum physics is that *a particle or wave is changed by observing it*. Quantum matter develops a relationship with the observer and changes to meet his or her expectation. All of the wave function representing the observed system collapses, except the one part, which actualizes into reality" (Zukav, 1979, 79).

"Knowing is disrupting". Every time we go to measure something, we interfere. A quantum wave function builds and builds in possibilities until the moment of measurement, when its future collapses into only one aspect. Which aspect of that wave function comes forth is largely determined by what we decide to measure" (Wolf, in Wheatley 1999, 64).

"When we choose to experiment for one aspect, we lose our ability to see any other. Every act of measurement loses more information than it gains, closing the box irretrievably and forever on other potentials. Every observation is preceded by a choice of what to observe" (Rose 1997, Ch 2).

"We create not only the present with our observations, but the past as well" (Gribbin 1984, 212).

"The electron, like all quantum entities acts in a way that indicates that it "knows" what the scientists is observing for and adjusts its behaviour accordingly. (Gribbin 1984, 171).

"We would do well to explore how our perceptions of people and events shape the reality that we then end up struggling with so much" (Wheatley 1999, 64).

"However, these two complementary identities of one particle cannot be studied simultaneously as a unified whole, reflected by another major principle of quantum physics - Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle: We can measure the particle aspect, or the wave aspect - either location or movement - but we can never measure both at the same time. The most we can know about any given wave packet is a fuzzy reading of its position and an equally fuzzy reading of its momentum" (Zohar 1990, 27).

Influence of Quantum Physics on How We Think & Behave

"To live in a quantum world, to weave here and there with ease and grace, we need to change what we do. We need fewer descriptions of tasks and instead learn how to facilitate process. We need to become savvy about how to foster relationships, how to nurture growth and development. All of us need to become better at listening, conversing, respecting one another's uniqueness, because these are essential for strong relationships" (Wheatley 1999, p. 39).

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"New understandings of change and disorder have also emerged from chaos theory. Work in this field has led to a new appreciation of the relationship between order and chaos. These two forces are now understood as mirror images, two states that contain each other" (Wheatley 1999, p. 13).

"Chaos theory exposes the world's *nonlinear dynamics*, which in no way resemble the neat charts and figures we have drawn so carefully" (Wheatley 1999, p. 121).

The "Butterfly Effect"

"Science has been profoundly affected by this new relationship with the non-linear nature of our world. Many of the prevailing assumptions of scientific thought have had to be recanted. As scientist Arthur Winfree expresses it, the old dream of science was of a universe that was unaffected by slight changes...The world is far more sensitive than we had ever dreamed" (Wheatley 1999, p. 122).

"In non-linear systems, *iteration* helps small differences grow into powerful and unpredictable effects. In complex ways that no model will ever capture, the system feeds back on itself, magnifying slight variances, communicating throughout its networks, becoming disturbed and unstable - and prohibiting prediction ever. Iteration launches a system on a journey that visits both chaos and order. The most beautiful consequences of iteration are found in the artistry of *fractals*" (Wheatley 1999, p. 122).

"Fractals describe any object or form created from repeating patterns evident at many levels of scale. There are an infinite number of fractals, both natural and human-made" (Wheatley 1999, p. 123).

"It is not any one solution that matters, but the composite picture of those behaviours that emerges after countless iterations. As individual solutions are plotted, the whole of the system emerges in the form of detailed repetitive shapes" (Wheatley 1999, p. 123).

"Yet to understand and work with the system, we need to be able to observe it as a system, in its wholeness. Wholeness is revealed only as shapes, not facts. Systems reveal themselves as patterns, not as isolated incidents or data points" (Capra 1996, Ch. 3).

"Learning to look for wholeness is a new skill for us, and it has been difficult to rely on old measures, even when we know they don't give us the information we need; but seeing patterns is not a foreign skill to us" (Wheatley, 1999, p. 125).

"Organizations that display a strong commitment to their values make good use of this fractal creation process. In these organizations, it doesn't matter where you go, whom you talk with, or what that person's role is. By observing the behaviour of a production floor employee or a senior executive, you can tell what the organization values and how it chooses to do its work. You hear the values referred to even in casual conversations. You feel the values are real and alive."

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"And in true fractal fashion, these vital agreements do not restrict individuals from embodying them in diverse and unique ways. Self-similarity is not achieved through compliance to an exhausting set of standards and rules, but from a few simple principles that everyone is accountable for, operating in a condition of individual freedom."

"Behaviours don't change just by announcing new values. We move only gradually into being able to act congruently with those values. To do this, we have to develop much greater awareness of how we're acting; we have to become far more self-reflective than normal. We have to help one another notice when we fall back into old behaviours. We will all slip back into the past - that is unavoidable - but when this happens, we agree to counsel one another with a generous spirit. Little by little, tested by events and crises, we learn how to enact these new values. We slowly become who we said we wanted to be" (Wheatley 1999, 130).

"This kind of work must involve the whole group. The whole group must go in pursuit of itself; there is no other way to learn who they are. But as people engage together to learn more about their collective identity, it affects them as individuals in a surprising way. They are able to see how their personal patterns and behaviours contribute to the whole. The surprise is that they then take responsibility for the changing themselves" (Wheatley 1999, p. 144).

We need to understand that all change results from a change in meaning. Meaning is created by the process of self-reference. We change only if we decide that the change is meaningful to who we are. Will it help us become who we want to be? (Wheatley 1999, 148).

"I assume that even in the presence of a group or collective identity, there are as many different interpretations as there are people in the group. I assume I will discover multiple and divergent interpretations for everything that occurs. I expect diverse responses; gradually, I am even learning to welcome them" (Wheatley 1999, 148).

"As we contemplate how networks change themselves, it helps to remember that we are working with energy, not matter. Energy behaves differently than matter. It fills the universe, possibly traveling many times faster than the speed of light. It moves through invisible media and connections" (Wheatley 1999, 152).

"Meaning has many of the qualities of energy. It doesn't exist in physical form anywhere. We make it up as we self-reference our way through life. It can't be explained by Newtonian physics" (Wheatley 1999, 152).

"From the early Greek Heraclitus to the most recent thinking in science, life is described as a process, a process of becoming" (Prigogine 1998, 10).

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Building Community

"Older forms of community did not take into account the phenomenon of synergy; the experience of individuals and groups existing in a dynamic balance and contributing to one another's full expression rather than detracting from it. Individuals exist only in the context of the larger whole, embedded in and defined by a nurturing web of relationship. The stronger and healthier the community, the stronger and healthier is the individual and vice versa. You do not need to decide if you are an individual first and a community second, or whether the rights of the community come first and your individual rights come second. Both are essential to the system" (Shaffer & Anundsen 1993, 31).

"Humans and their environment - families, neighbourhoods, cities, ecological systems - are not machines that operate according to a linear sequence of cause and effect. Everything is connected to, and both influences and is influenced by, everything else. We are all open systems continuously exchanging energy with other systems, and every movement in the web causes vibrations in other parts of the web, whether we realize it or not" (Shaffer & Anundsen 1993, 32).

"To survive, firms and their employees must learn to think systematically, seeing patterns, interrelationships, and interdependencies rather than chains of cause and effect. They must not lose their sense of connection to the larger whole" (Senge 1990).

Characteristics of a Healthy, Functional Workplace Community

1. Alignment of Values - pursuing a common mission that aligns with their personal values.
2. Employee-Based - a structure that resembles more of a pancake than a pyramid.
3. Teamwork - people work in teams rather than alone whenever possible.
4. Open Communication - information flows randomly - upward, downward, sideways, from outside in and from inside out. The organization actively seeks feedback from the outside and encourages internal questioning.
5. Mutual Support - both on a work and personal basis; support bubbles over into play and fun.
6. Respect for Individuality - you cannot separate building community from building individuals. The health of all contemporary communities depends on diversity - the opportunity for better decisions and richer community experience.
7. Permeable Boundaries - acknowledging interdependence, balancing work with other life responsibilities.
8. Group Renewal - holding regular rituals that renew and cultivate the sense of community.

(Shaffer & Anundsen 1993, 116-121)

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Comments on Maintaining Healthy, Functional Workplace Communities

"From what I know of other companies, ours is better. But that doesn't mean it is perfect. There are pockets of wonderful, supportive people and pockets of dysfunctional, patronizing folks. That's diversity at its finest." (Levi Strauss employee in Shaffer & Anundsen 1993, 124).

"One disadvantage, however, is that you become so engaged. I have to send my people home and make them take vacations. Another is the necessity to be truthful, even when the truth is painful. I have to walk into a colleague's office and say, 'This is how I am feeling.' We are constantly confronting each other in ways people usually don't at work. I still fight against my urge to control and mistrust. ?Vulnerability isn't easy. But we are coached along the way" (Michele Hunt, Vice-President for Quality and People Development at Herman Miller, in Shaffer & Anundsen 1993, 123).

"Self-managing work teams require people to develop management and communication skills that workers in traditional plants do not need. Although the company offers training programs to develop these skills, it's hard to maintain this system. It takes constant work, constant maintenance, constant attention. It tends to stray - there are moments of everyone being very enthusiastic and then people get a little bit tired" (worker at the Quaker Oats pet food plant, Topeka, Kansas, in Shaffer & Anundsen 1993, 124).

Five Phases of Community Development

1. Excitement: Getting high on possibilities
2. Autonomy: Jockeying for power
3. Stability: Settling into roles and structures
4. Synergy: Allowing self and group to mutually unfold - the epitome of conscious community
5. Transformation: Expanding, segmenting or disbanding

(Shaffer & Anundsen 1993, 210)

"The truth is, community by its very nature, is continually in flux" (Shaffer & Anundsen 1993, 217).

I bless the Sunday Circle for revealing the depth of connection that is possible, through utterly simple forms of gathering and sharing, in this seemingly splintered world" (Shaffer & Anundsen 1993, 220).
I would rather be whole than good. (C.J. Jung in Shaffer & Anundsen 1993, 223)

A right relationship with the shadow offers us a great gift: to lead us back to our buried potentials. (Connie Zweig & Jeremiah Abrams in Shaffer & Anundsen 1993, 223).

Sharing brokenness as well as heroism is an essential part of maintaining community. Both the darkness and the light can be expressed (Foundation for Community Encouragement in Shaffer & Anundsen 1993, 230).

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I used to think that I was considerate and cooperative. I usually blamed others for whatever went wrong. Slowly and reluctantly, I realized how self-centered and self-righteous I was and how easily I could be careless, irresponsible, and destructive (Arthur Gladstone in Shaffer & Anundsen 1993, 231).

Embracing the Shadow Side of Community

The Many Guises of the Shadow (in Shaffer & Anundsen 1993, 232 - 242)

1. The Harmony Trap: the danger lies in ignoring the process that leads to harmony and that maintains harmony after it is attained. Community members might be encouraged to discuss their own fears about confronting conflict and anger in a group setting, and how members have successfully handled similar situations in other communities or times in their lives.

2. The Equality Trap: communities of friends or peer-support groups tend to operate on the unspoken assumption that all members wield equal amounts of power. Members of some communities that include management-staff hierarchies feel uncomfortable about the power differences, so they downplay these differences and create the impression that, beneath the titles, everyone is equal. These have to be acknowledged (that differences in power are inevitable and are not necessarily bad) and agreed to (in which areas of your community life equality is important and to an annual power audit) . Equality, like harmony is a fluid state. No group, no matter how committed to equality, ever shares power equally for more than a few serendipitous minutes at a time.

3. Unresolved Family Projections sometimes, community members assume roles that are analogous to those they assume or did assume in their family (e.g., caretaker, father, mother, etc.). Unresolved family projections and dependencies are nothing to be ashamed of. Individual group members can help resolve these projections through personal efforts (either psychological assistance or simply reminding themselves that 'she is not my mother') and group restructuring to encourage interdependence.

4. Hidden Agendas & Power Plays if dysfunctional group dynamics go unchecked, trust can deteriorate and ugly power games emerge. Secret power plays and hidden agendas can arise in even the most aware and best-intentioned communities. When this happens, the community needs to examine their purpose and determine how to best align community and individual interests with their commitments to each other and to the larger mission. Annual vision audits and setting aside time on a weekly basis to allow genuine dialogue can be of assistance. Others include welcoming diverse points of view, developing communication guidelines, and training community members in conflict resolution skills.

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5. Task vs Process a tension can develop between the “doers - getting the job done quickly” and the “processors- those who want to make sure how the job gets done is right, even if it takes a little more time”. Communities who discover this tension are growing towards greater health. Healing and transformation come not only through individual members recovering from their personal (workaholism) addictions or their lack of challenge, but also through the community admitting that it too, is an addict, and incorporating processes into routines that honour individual storytelling.
6. The Sexual Coverup When a group is coalescing into community, the resulting intimacy often leads to sexual attraction. If inappropriately expressed, this powerful dynamic can ruin the community. Sexual issues are difficult to share because we have such an enormous “edge” there - tremendous anxiety, fear and unconsciousness. So, people usually distance from it or blast through it; they never hang out at the edge. Creating a safe environment for members to eventually remove their masks about sexuality by first speaking honestly and with feeling about less explosive issues may be helpful. As trust builds and community members develop clear communication guidelines, you may begin to explore sexual issues.

There is a strong shadow where there is much light. (Goethe in Shaffer & Anundsen 1993, 243)

Only by making friends with the shadow, do we gain the friendship of the self. (Erich Neumann in Shaffer & Anundsen 1993, 239)

Communicating in Communities

The solution is not a model, it's a path - and the key to that path is dialogue...I believe the only way answers will emerge is through real talk among people. When everything is reduced to polarized issues, shrill name calling and sound-bite simplification, we've lost public talk about our values - the basis of all real problem-solving. (Frances Moore Lappé in Shaffer & Anundsen 1993, 253)

Making Decisions and Governing in Communities

“In a learning organization, leader's roles differ dramatically from that of charismatic decision maker; leaders are designers, teachers and stewards” (Senge 1999 in Shaffer & Anundsen 1993, 272).

“Because this approach [sharing information in cross functional, non-hierarchical teams] works only in an atmosphere of trust and respect, effective leaders strive to create such a climate, inspiring others to commit to a common purpose, take personal responsibility for the greater whole, and care for their individual needs in the process. The more commitment leaders can generate, the less control they need, and the greater productivity and creativity they can unleash” (Shaffer & Anundsen 1993, 272-73).

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Sharing and rotating various leadership roles - focalizer, relationship minder, event organizer, peacekeeper, gadfly, dream-holder, etc - will help keep your community from falling into stagnation or polarization and will strengthen the individual members" (Shaffer & Anundsen 1993, 276).

Most communities have "varying levels of commitment and capability, and varying needs among the membership." One suggested "governance system blends consensus with hierarchy. A core group" of long-time members assumes responsibility for major decisions, while eliciting input from - and, whenever possible, arriving at agreement with - the rest of the community." This "core-group system is an effective way to balance individual and group needs" (Shaffer & Anundsen 1993, 276).

"In this three part procedure of "attunement", the group first gathers facts, then clears emotions, and, finally, listens to intuition. Sometimes emotions can cloud the intuitive process. Encouraging community members to express any fear, anger, or sadness they may be feeling about an issue before practising attunement can yield clearer results. In attunement, the community have rational discussion of the pros and cons, and engage in a collective interpretation of the pictures, body sensations, and verbal messages they received during the short meditation they engage in before making a decision. The assumption is that not all information comes through direct and obvious channels. It seeps in from outside, wells up from inside the individual members, and emerges from a synthesis of members' thoughts, feelings, and reasonings" (Shaffer & Anundsen 1993, 277).

"A lasting agreement contains three components: content satisfaction ("I liked the decision"), procedural satisfaction ("I liked the process"), and psychological satisfaction ("I liked how I was treated during the process") Shaffer & Anundsen 1993, 281).

The primary lessons of conflict: first, it is inevitable in group endeavours, and second, it is not necessarily bad. In fact, when handled well, conflict can strengthen and enhance community. Indeed, the hallmark of healthy, conscious community is the willingness to acknowledge and work with conflict" (Shaffer & Anundsen 1993, 290).

Celebrating and Renewing Community

"Rituals affirm the value of any transition. When we celebrate life changes together, we create strong bonds of intimacy and trust that can generate new culture. When we undergo a change uncelebrated and unmarked, that transition is devalued, rendered invisible" (Starhawk in Shaffer & Anundsen 1993, 306).

"Although the dominant culture tends to trivialize rites and ceremony and regulate them to the fringes of life, celebrations play a central role in building and sustaining community. Properly performed, these processes transform both individuals and groups...When members of a group intentionally step outside the flow of ordinary business and gather to acknowledge a passage or a milestone, however simply, they perceive each other with fresh eyes. They see their community or organization as a living, organic whole rather than a fragmented collection of separate parts. As members, they reaffirm their connection with one another and their identity and purpose as a group" (Shaffer & Anundsen 1993, 306).

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Pre-modern societies that experience time as cyclical understand that a restful phase of inner processing follows every phase of outward production...Shifting from a linear, machine-like mind-set to a more cyclical, organic one means remembering that you and your community are not machines but living organisms that require regular periods of inward rather than outward focusing. Time-outs, far from being periods in which nothing happens, permit essential inner processes to take place. They function as sleep and dreaming do in daily life, allowing you to cross the threshold to another reality and returned refreshed and renewed" (Shaffer & Anundsen 1993, 309.)

Organizational as well as individual effectiveness requires development and renewal of all four dimensions [physical, spiritual, mental, and social-emotional] in a wise and balanced way" (Stephen R. Covey in Shaffer & Anundsen 1993, 310).

"Ritual affirms the common patterns, the values, the shared joys, risks, sorrows and changes that bind a community. Ritual links together our ancestors and descendants, those who went before with those who will come after us" (Starhawk in Shaffer & Anundsen 1993, 319).

"A human being is part of the whole called by us universe, a part limited in time and space. [We] experience [ourselves], [our] thoughts and feelings as something separated from the rest, a kind of optical delusion of [our] consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty" (Albert Einstein in Shaffer & Anundsen 1993, 320).

"We must be the change we wish to see in the world" (Mohandas Gandhi in Shaffer & Anundsen 1993, 324).

"We are members of one great body, planted by nature in a mutual love, and fitted for social life. We must consider that we were born for the good of the whole" (Seneca in Shaffer & Anundsen, 1993, 322).

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