

LEADERSHIP Excellence

Warren Bennis



THE MAGAZINE OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT, MANAGERIAL EFFECTIVENESS, AND ORGANIZATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY
VOL. 29 NO. 4 CREATING WE SPECIAL EDITION 2012



“Judith Glaser is the best thought leader on *Conversational Intelligence*.”
—Ken Shelton, editor/publisher since 1984, *Leadership Excellence* magazine

Leadership Excellence has selected **Judith E. Glaser** as one of the **Top 20 Thought Leaders on Leadership and Culture**. Her groundbreaking work, exemplified in the *The DNA of Leadership*, sets her apart as a pioneer in linking neuroscience principles to the understanding of what makes great leaders and great organizations. Through her signature work on *Conversational Intelligence™*—first introduced in *Creating WE: Change I-thinking to WE-thinking & Build a Healthy Thriving Organization*—Judith offers leaders the principles, practices, frameworks and tools for shaping, architecting and influencing culture to achieve higher levels of performance and world-class business results.

JUDITH E. GLASER
Engage in CHANGES

Leaders are trying to make the shift from a top-down, control-driven style of leadership to a collaborative and engaging style that grows talent and attracts customers to partner in each other’s success. 2

JUDITH E. GLASER
Eliminate Fear

Leaders need to ensure that fear does not consume the workplace and degrade performance. To reduce fear at work, eliminate *mixed messages*—the catalytic driver of fear—through *direct* and *clear* communication. 3

JUDITH E. GLASER
Build TRUST

Why is trust so low? Employees don’t trust their bosses, bosses don’t trust their employees, and customers (buyers) don’t seem to trust sellers. *What a mess!* Fortunately, *it doesn’t have to be this way*. We can create *healthy environments* where *trust* is the currency and *success* the outcome. 5

JUDITH E. GLASER
Leadership Language

Create conversations that enable you to *co-create the future together*. This is not about *lecturing* or *tell-sell-yell* but about *practicing how to*

navigate with others in and out of scenarios and alternatives from *many perspectives* to arrive at practices and rituals that *we all embrace* for how work gets done inside our culture. Change Leaders must learn to create the conversational space for change to happen. . . . 6

JUDITH E. GLASER
Conversation Dashboards

Creating *visible dashboards* gives us a language for discussing how we are feeling about others’ senses of fair play, and how best to use this information to create better ways to communicate and relate with each other. 8

JUDITH E. GLASER
Conversational Intelligence

Few leaders understand how vital conversation is to the health and productivity of their cultures. Unhealthy conversations are at the root of *distrust, deceit, betrayal, and avoidance*—leading to *lower productivity, innovation, and ultimately, to lower success*. 9

Summary

The DNA Assessment is a one of a kind tool for identifying your culture’s success profile 10

VISIT:

WWW.CREATINGWE.COM

Open your mind
to an innovative,
unprecedented
approach to
collaboration
through the
neuroscience
of conversations.



FREE
Assessment & Consult
www.CreatingWE.com/LE



Everything happens through conversations!™

Elevate your teams to become more innovative, collaborative, and co-creative using **breakthrough, pioneering** tools and techniques.

Conversational Intelligence™ – our proven formula for success!

Call us to learn more about our proprietary programs grounded in neuroscience:

- Transformational Coaching
- Team Alignment
- Certifications & Assessments
- Transformational Consulting
- Innovation/Team Summits
- ...and more

Visit CreatingWE.com/LE for a **FREE** assessment & consult.

CreatingWE.com
(212) 307-4386

JEGlaser@CreatingWE.com
Judith E. Glaser, CEO & Founder

POWERED BY
BETTERWORKS
COMMUNICATIONS, INC.

Engage in CHANGES

Shaping the DNA of your culture.



by Judith E. Glaser

WHAT IF WE COULD create organizations where change and transformation were exhilarating and natural? Where people were devoted, engaged, and accountable to act as owners and leaders rather than visitors and blind followers? Where people worked with each other to differentiate their brand and capture the hearts, minds, and souls of customers?

Leaders are trying to make the shift from a top-down, control-driven style of leadership to a collaborative and engaging style that grows talent and attracts customers to partner in each other's success. Many companies are investing incredible time and resources into leadership and talent development programs, hoping to reap the benefits of a healthy, engaged, and inspired workforce. The leader's role is to determine the competencies required for success and to help people learn how to work together to expand their ability to handle complexity and change.

At the heart of many leadership development programs is the desire to help leaders learn how to motivate and engage others to deliver results. Some companies focus on helping leaders become more self aware, helping them recognize what may cause them to derail and prevent it. Other companies focus on developing their high-potential leaders to ensure an ongoing flow of talent in the organization; some on how to think bigger and bolder and others on how to use feedback to become better navigators of the terrain.

Imagine that you *trigger this potential shift*, set the stage for growth, and shape the culture so that latent talent emerges. *What would that place look like?*

CHANGES that Transform a Culture

Our brains are designed to be social. Our need for *belonging* is more powerful than our need for *safety*. When we are rejected, we experience pain in the same centers in the brain and body as when we are in a car crash. Being *emotionally orphaned* is

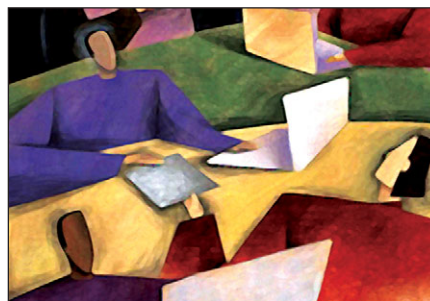
more painful than death. When others show us love, respect, and honor us, it triggers the same centers in the brain as when we eat chocolate or have sex. It gives us a "high!" Learning how to create a "high" in your organization will change how you lead.

Ask yourself this question: *Am I creating a culture that enables colleagues to create the future? Are we forming feedback-rich relationships for mutual success? Do we make beliefs transparent, and collaborate and co-create positive CHANGES?*

Seven Conversations

To create a more *WE-centric* culture, you need to engage in seven conversations that shape your cultural DNA:

1. Co-creating Conversations: Are conversations healthy? Do people complain about others behind their backs,



or do people have face-to-face healthy discussions? Is there a lot of triangulation (people using others to tell someone what's on their mind) or do people give direct feedback to others? Are people working in silos, or is there an ongoing conversation about organizational success? Are people engaged in working out how to get to the end game, or are they distracted with conversations about whose fault it is that things are not moving forward? Is there a blaming/victim culture or an accountability culture? Is the enterprise being run by fear or hope? Do people share a common language and a common reality? Can people tell the truth? Or is truth telling painful and hidden to protect people from reality?

• **Be an inclusive leader:** Help people see how they can contribute and participate in creating a great culture and community. **Action:** shift from *exclusion* (pain) to *inclusion* (pleasure).

2. Heart and soul: Is there a spirit of appreciation or a punitive spirit? Do

leaders complain about poor performance, or are they skilled at developing talent? Do leaders provide developmental feedback? Do they recognize good work and effort, or only look for what's wrong? Do they look at the past and complain about what's not happening, or do they focus people on creating the desired future? Do they focus on problems or opportunities?

• **Be an appreciative and honest leader:** Set the tone for open, honest, caring communication, helping people learn how to express what they are feeling and to move from being politically driven, to respectful, supportive, direct and open in all communications. **Action:** shift from *judging* (pain) to *appreciating* (pleasure).

3. Actualization of vision: Are leaders providing direction? Often the vision is too far out for people to grasp its implications. When guiding principles are not practiced, breakdowns occur in the actualization of the vision and in relationships between leaders and employees. Leaders communicate a vision and expect employees to implement it. What's missing is the interpretation of the vision down to the level of "what does it mean to me and what do I have to change to get there?" It also means creating benchmarks for measuring success, sharing those measures, and using them to create a culture of learning.

• **Be an aspirational leader:** Are you limiting people's aspirations and leading them to lower their sights rather than helping them to embrace exciting and challenging possibilities? **Action:** shift from *limiting* (pain) to *expanding* (pleasure).

4. Networks: Are employees collaborating and bonding across boundaries? Clanning takes place when people cluster together to support each other in the pursuit of their goals. Clanning customs either strengthen or weaken the culture. Some cultures form silos, where groups of people are excluded from others by division, department, function, or sub-culture.

Healthy organizations create collaborative teams, where individuals find ways to contribute to the betterment of the whole organization. Healthy organizations form networks that allow vital information, innovative ideas, and best practices to be shared internally and with outside vendors and customers. The mental health of the culture depends on the "wellness" of the factions with sub-cultures co-existing and co-creating together in spite of their differences.

Eliminate Fear

Stopping anxiety in its tracks.



by Judith E. Glaser

FEAR SOMEHOW TOUCHES almost every aspect of our lives. It is woven

invisibly into the fabric of our existence and often sets into motion a chain of reactions and circumstances that affect the way we think and our behavior, for better or worse, with others.

As leaders we need to ensure that fear does not consume our workplaces and degrade the performance of our people. The key to reducing fear at work is to eliminate mixed messages—the catalytic driver of fear—through direct and clear communication.

WE-centric leaders lift people out of fear, frustration, and anger, the emotions that cause people to *disengage* from each other. When people feel disconnected, they become reactive, project their anxiety onto others, create more fear, blame others for what is missing in their lives, reject first to avoid being rejected, and disengage.

WE-centric leaders create a culture that enables colleagues to be *connected*, involved in living common values and vision. When leaders turn to others for suggestions and value them, they create a community that looks forward to coming to work. When colleagues work in concert, they learn from each other, develop higher-level skills and wisdom, meet performance goals, and turn breakdowns into breakthroughs.

Manage Three Dynamics

Learn to manage three dynamics:

- First, learn to manage your own reactions—bullying, intimidating, and micromanaging don't get results or inspire others to higher performance.
- Second, put your ego behind you—what matters is what “we can do together” not what “I” can do.
- Third, and most importantly, let go of the past; focus on the challenges facing you and build healthy, mutually beneficial relationships.

Mastering these three dynamics will change everything. Your ability to lead will increase exponentially, and you will enhance your ability to create inspiring environments where people work together for mutual gain, growth, and understanding.

Monitor the behavior of your culture. When teams are in conflict, there may be excessive gossip. The remedy is to bring the groups together to harmonize or expand their common perspectives. People can have different voices, but when they come together they need to sing a common song.

• **Be a trusted and collaborative leader:** Are you sharing information, exchanging best practices, reducing the need to protect turf, and breaking down silos to explore uncharted territory, test the waters, explore, and pioneer new territories? **Action:** shift from *withholding* (pain) to *sharing* (pleasure).

5. **Give and take: In what ways are colleagues engaging with each other for mutual success?** An enterprise depends on the sharing of resources, ideas, and practices to survive and thrive in the face of challenges. A *cultural fingerprint* spans the dimensions from harboring to sharing these resources. As colleagues learn to share and trust, leaders evolve the capability of sustaining trust in the face of challenges. Are they learning from past mistakes and using them to find new and better strategies?

Cultures that encourage brainstorming with no support process for turning the ideas into reality create incredible frustration. Unmet expectations abound, and employees lose faith in their leaders and in themselves. A mature culture puts in place support systems such as Ideation and Innovation Centers. The management team resources projects designed to test and experiment new ways of thinking and doing. Making mistakes is okay in the spirit of discovery. People are rewarded for coming up with new products and services and turning their ideas into realities.

• **Be a generative leader:** Are you stuck in old ways and grooves—instead of focusing on innovative, creative, experimental, and generative ways of leading? **Action:** shift from *fear* (pain) to *experimenting* (pleasure).

6. **Enterprise leadership development: Is there a feeling that “we’re all in this together?” developing the talent and voice we need to be successful.** Are employees and management working together to develop the bench strength and talent to address the challenges of the present and the future? Are leaders enabling employees to challenge the status quo and have a voice? Are they developing leadership points of

view? Are leaders pushing their ideas on others (creating a culture of complacency) or are they setting the stage for people to grow their points of view (take ownership and have strong commitment)? Do people feel suppressed? What forums exist for pushing against the current rules and culture and creating the next generation of thinking and being? What kind of leader are you?

• **Be an influential leader:** Are you setting the tone, teaching people how to speak up, express their voice, challenge authority and group-think, and develop their ideas, points of view and wisdom to contribute to the growth of the brand. **Action:** shift from *dictating* (pain) to *developing* (pleasure).

7. **Spirit: Is there a spirit of discovery and inquiry in the enterprise?** Are people learning from past mistakes and using them to work better and smarter? Can people let go of the past and embrace the new? Is everyone connected and working to realize a common purpose? Are people clear about who we are and what we stand for? Is there an enterprise brand? Do employees live the brand? Do they understand it?

How do they engage with customers about the brand to build its power and magnetism? Does the brand engage the hearts, minds, and spirits of employees and customers?

• **Be an enterprise leader:** Are you setting the tone for enterprise spirit, helping people move from a focus on making the numbers or from “win at all cost” or “I win, your lose” to contributing to their growth in the context of enterprise growth. **Action:** from *complacency* (pain) to *celebration* (pleasure).

Unaware leaders blame others for what goes wrong. Self-aware leaders look inside and explore the dynamics of their own nature, and the impact they have on their culture. They learn what it takes to create a culture that enables colleagues to be fully engaged and motivated. Are you willing to examine your leadership and how you influence colleagues? When you influence in positive ways, you have a more profound impact on growth, and you create a culture that sustains commitment and enthusiasm to achieve your vital strategies and goals. **LE**

Judith E. Glaser is CEO of Benchmark Communications, Chairman of the Creating WE Institute, and author of *Creating WE, The DNA of Leadership, and 42 Rules for Creating WE*. Visit www.creatingwe.com.

ACTION: *Engage in these seven conversations.*



Hardwiring the DNA of a Culture

From birth, we learn to avoid physical pain and move toward physical pleasure. Over time, we learn to protect ourselves from ego pain, building habits and patterns of behavior that keep us safe from feeling belittled, embarrassed, or devalued.

At work this may translate into avoiding a person who seems to compete with you when you speak up, to avoiding a boss who sends you silent signals of disappointment. Pain can also come from what you anticipate—not from what is real. If you imagine that telling colleagues they are annoying you will lead to a fight or argument, just the thought of having that conversation will produce the social pain of being rejected or being in an uncomfortable conversation.

We often avoid that conversation and hold the frustration inside. The feared implications of pain become so real for us that we turn to avoidance, since confronting a person with a difficult conversation may lead to yelling, rejection, or embarrassment. These emotions, as well as all of our many emotions are tied directly to feelings of pain and pleasure—in fact they are the source of our pain and pleasure.

When we live in fear, we withdraw, build our own story of reality, imagine others are out to get us, and react accordingly. We stop turning to others for help and stop taking feedback and advice from others.

- **Universal fears** include the fear of being excluded—so we create networks and exclude others first. Being rejected—so we reject first. Being judged unfairly—so we criticize and blame others. Failing—so we avoid taking risks and making mistakes. Losing power—so we intimidate others to get power. Feeling stupid—so we either don't speak up or speak too much. Looking bad in front of others—so we save face. When we perceive the world through a lens of fear, our egos drive us to develop habit patterns of protection. Over time, we incorporate defensive behavior patterns into our daily routines. We turn away from others when we are coming from protective behaviors, rather than turning to others for help.

- **Universal desires** include the desire to be included on a winning team, to be appreciated, successful, powerful, creative, smart, and influential; to have a leadership voice with meaning and purpose; to learn, grow, and explore.



Does Fear Live in Your Organization?

How you manage fear in the workplace determines the levels of productivity and success that your organization and teams achieve. As a leader, you can shape the experiences people have at work by reducing fear and inner focus by creating cultures that facilitate enhanced sensitivity, mutual support, vital communication, and engagement in the strategy.

Are your people afraid? I'm not asking if they're scared of you because you are a bully. (You aren't, are you?) Nor am I talking about the fear that comes from worrying about being punished for a well-thought-out plan or product launch that fails. Plenty of literature exists on how you can help your employees do their jobs better.

I am talking about something more visceral: anxiety caused by the concern that something drastically harmful—such as a layoff, firing, pay cut, or demotion—will happen. Everyone is fragile at the core. We all worry that tomorrow will be our last day. Fear impedes people from doing their best work.

How can you, as a leader, eliminate it? Here are four ways:

1. Be present. Your people spend inordinate time watching everything you do. If you are almost always behind closed doors, don't seem to be listening

during conversations, spend a lot of time reminiscing about the way things used to be, or talk about a future that seems unconnected to the present, people are going to read things into your actions and words and make stuff up. Typically, what they imagine won't be positive.

To make yourself present in the eyes of your reports, you need to make yourself open to others by being tuned into your relationship environment. You may need to have a talk you didn't plan on having with a staffer. Or get sidetracked by needy employees who distract you from grand thoughts. Welcome to life in the big city. Business is about people. It's about how we handle our relationships with others.

2. Tell people where they stand. As leaders, we resist doing this because we fear it will lead to broken relationships, feelings of rejection, and messes we can't fix. So we don't raise certain issues. Yet people need to know where they stand so they can do something about it. Once they know, they often discover that their imagined fears were much worse than reality.

3. Provide context in every communication. A picture with a frame becomes a different picture. Without background, fear can be elevated by confusion and uncertainty

A technology company I'm working with is growing rapidly. Sales have tripled in two years and now top \$1 billion. The chief financial officer, who came from a large company in anticipation of this kind of growth, brought with him his "big company" mindset. One of the first things he told his staff was: "Go out and hire your replacement."

He thought his message was clear: "I want you to hire someone capable of filling your shoes because with all this growth—and how wonderful you all are—I anticipate promoting each of you."

His staff heard: "Hire your replacement because none of you are good enough and you all will be fired soon."

Not surprisingly, his employees grew anxious. Morale and performance suffered. When I explained to the CFO what his people had heard, he instantly understood what he had done. He called a meeting to explain that he wanted his people to go out and search for their own replacements as part of planning for the future and to make it easier for him to promote them when the time was right.

Putting this context around the statement was not only less frightening, it made people feel good about themselves and the company—and more secure about their role in the growth process. Not surprisingly, fear receded and performance improved. Context can make things that are bad seem right—or at least far less worrisome.

4. Use honesty at all times. No one likes to tell the truth when it will hurt someone or make that person look bad. So we fudge. As adults, we should know better. Often we don't. When the truth surfaces, the impact is twice as bad as it would have been without the fibs.

At all times, tell the truth—tactfully and within the appropriate context. Context, in this case, does not mean spin. Don't make a situation sound better than it is, even if you can.

As a leader, you can have no greater resource than a high-performing team. If you are honest, you'll admit that there are times—maybe far too often—when the people who work for you are not producing their best work. Check to see if fear is one reason. **LE**

Judith E. Glaser is CEO of Benchmark Communications, Chairman of the Creating WE Institute, and author of *Creating WE, The DNA of Leadership, and 42 Rules for Creating WE*. Visit www.creatingwe.com.

ACTION: Eliminate fear to create high performance.

Build TRUST

Getting in front of the curve.



by Judith E. Glaser

MOST OF US WOULD acknowledge that trust is a key part of our lives. We may even think we know how to size up whether to trust someone at that moment of contact when we first meet, perhaps in whom we choose to hire or work with.

But, if everyone thinks along similar lines, why does it always seem like no one trusts each other? Employees don't trust their bosses, bosses certainly don't trust their employees and, when it comes down to it, your customers don't seem to trust any of you. What a mess. Fortunately, it doesn't have to be this way. We can create healthy environments where trust is the currency and success is the outcome.

The decision to trust or distrust someone takes just a moment. That moment—whether it be a handshake, a telephone call or an email—locks in a relationship trajectory that may last for weeks, months or even possibly a lifetime. Our brains, having evolved over millions of years, are conditioned to make snap judgments in identifying our friends and foes—those people that we trust to act in our best interest as opposed to those that seek to take advantage of us.

It's vital to understand trust. Trust begins and maintains a relationship, and distrust in some cases ends it.

For simplicity's sake, let's define what I mean by trust and distrust.

Trust looks like this:

I trust that you and I share the same view of reality. I trust that you will have my best interests at heart (you care about me); that you will not cause me to fear you; you will allow me to speak my voice without fear of retribution so I can be open and candid with you and share everything that's on my mind. (You demonstrate that you are my friend, not my foe.)

Distrust looks like this:

You and I see the world very differently. We disagree on what's important. I feel you have your own interests at heart and could care less about mine. You talk out of two sides of your mouth—one to me, and another to your closest buddies. I am afraid to share what's on my mind for fear

you'll use it against me. (In truth, you act like a foe, not a friend.)

It is essential to recognize how these two forces drive so many of our personal interactions and relationships. To understand them in a different way, consider the simple analogy of a door that guards the pathway to our inner self. When we feel trust, we readily open that door, leading to an exchange of thoughts, feelings and dreams with someone else. When we distrust someone, on the other hand, thinking that he or she is somehow a threat, you can bet we will slam our door as quickly as possible as we begin to *defend ourselves*.

Unfortunately, our brains don't always make the best judgments relative to our long-term interests when it comes to deciding what to do with that door: our neural programming is designed to make split second decisions right now, not consider the consequences down the road. That's why, especially in times of stress as we see in so many workplaces these days, we can find doors slamming left and right.

The downside of making snap decisions is that we might be misinterpret-



ing the signals we're receiving from our bosses and co-workers, leading us to mislabel friends as foes. Or, perhaps we have trusted someone in the past, only to have that person stab us in the back. (Just ask any of Bernard Madoff's investors about that dilemma.) We might even be unknowingly sending out signals of our own, causing others to distrust us even when we think we have that other person's best interests at heart.

What happens when trust is absent?

Human beings have a need to belong that is now considered, by neuroscientists and psychologists, to be more powerful than the need for physical safety and security. When we feel we are rejected from our tribe, as when we feel we don't fit in or feel embarrassed in front of others, we often choose to go into "radio silence" rather than openly and honestly address those feelings.

Sadly, many organizations operate in a perpetual state of distrust and fear. **Case in point:** A 2002 Golin-Harris sur-

vey found that sixty-nine percent of respondents agreed with the statement, "I just don't know who to trust anymore." A fearful state of mind alters how we see and experience reality, how we interact with others, and how much we are willing to engage, innovate, and speak our mind.

When trust is absent, we see REALITY with threatened eyes, and we:

- *Reveal less* than what we know or what is helpful to move forward
- *Expect more* than what is possible
- *Assume the worst* in others
- *Look at situations* with caution
- *Interpret communications* with fear
- *Tell secrets* we promised not to tell
- *Yes people* to avoid confronting truth

When we are in a state of distrust, the world feels threatening. Threats make us retreat. They make us feel we need to protect. We are more sensitive to feeling wrong, or feeling embarrassed, and we behave differently.

Neuroscientists say that high levels of threat give us an Amygdala Hijack, which is when fear networks are activated in our brains and we either "fight, flee, freeze, or appease others."

Here are seven Universal Threats that give us an Amygdala Hijack:

- *Tone threat*—judgmental or angry tone is felt as a threat to our ego
- *Hurt threat*—threat to our physical safety
- *Risk and punishment threat*—taking risks, fear of failure or making mistakes
- *Exclusion threat*—looking stupid in front of others and being ostracized
- *Anger threat*—fear of someone's potential anger toward us, and not knowing how to respond
- *Territory threat*—having our territory limited or diminished, or people encroaching on our territory
- *Status threat*—challenge to our status, or making us feel small

Neuroscience of Trust

Our level of trust is changed, in many cases, by the way we share information, that is, through conversations. Conversations trigger physical and emotional changes in our brains and bodies through altering the amounts of two of the most powerful hormones that affect social interaction: oxytocin, which enables bonding and collaboration, and testosterone, which enables our aggressive behaviors.

According to *Angelika Dimoka*, Ph.D., Temple University, "The brain is where trust lives or dies. Distrust takes place in the lower brain (the Amygdala and Limbic areas) and trust takes place in the higher brain (Prefrontal Cortex)."

Leadership Language

Bringing change to life.



by Judith E. Glaser

EVERYONE IS WRITING about change, and many books have been published about change, yet there is a difference between the theoretical and the actual. If you are entrusted to make change happen, are running a division, are in a strategic HR role, or are in the C-suite, there are things you should really be thinking about to get to the essence of what it takes to facilitate change. They key is in honoring the *Neuroscience of WE*.

20 Years Ago

When successful change occurs, those involved feel as the authors of change rather than the objects of change. They feel fully invested, accountable and energetic about the future, even in the face of huge challenges. I know this because I've worked on change and transformation initiatives for over 20 years.

All with good intention, many old approaches to change failed to help the organization really make the desired changes at the fundamental level of their corporate DNA. Without realizing it, the energy behind these efforts was a top-down compliance approach, where the senior team determined the new direction, strategies and mission, and told the organization in which direction to march. In some cases, after much effort and lots of marching to a new drum, many organizations would give up. Some even found that people were more despondent and disappointed than before they started.

Yet there were *successes*—all were not *failures*. We are going to weave a tapestry of how effective change happens, and will point to some of the factors that distinguish the successes from failures so you too can be *Change savvy*.

Neuroscience of WE

The *keys to success* lie in understanding change from a new perspective—that is from a brain-based perspective which we call the *Neuroscience of WE*; a perspective that gives us insight into how change is much more a process “we” do together than one that “I” do alone. When leaders understand how

Bruce S. McEwen, Ph.D., who is a professor and head of the Laboratory of Neuro-endocrinology at The Rockefeller University, states, “Trust is a phenomenon that is enhanced by oxytocin, which gets people to be socially interactive. Then you have the Amygdala, which is the sentinel along with the Prefrontal Cortex, paying attention to decide if the interaction is going to be rewarding or punishing. If the interaction is punishing we feel more aggressive and untrusting. We have to be wary and we move into protect behaviors.” Under stress, testosterone levels are increased.

If the interaction feels good you have more oxytocin and you relax. Testosterone works against oxytocin as does cortisol, another powerful hormone that is increased by stress. It's the balance between these hormones and the neural systems that they interact with that give us the feelings of trust or distrust.

Getting In Front of the Curve

Five characteristics of a conversation bring about a sense of well-being and connectivity with others. As you weave these conversations into your team-building and relationship-building activities, you'll notice a positive shift in the *openness* and *trust*. Focus on elevating the level of trust by:

1. Transparency—being more *open* and *transparent* with colleagues about what's going on in the department, what decisions are in play, and what's on your mind. Share information and be *open* to discuss *why you do what you do* . . . *breaking the code of silence*.

Actions:

- Encourage and have candid conversations that promote transparency and trust around the topics of “how we're doing” and “what we need to do” to create accountability and success throughout the organization.
- Provide feedback for aligning words, actions, and deeds.

2. Relationships—focusing on *building relationships* before *working on tasks* is paramount and provides a foundation for both handling difficult issues and identifying aspirations. Focus on . . . *getting in sync with people's needs and aspirations to create strong bonds*.

Actions:

- Decide on the *core values* that will guide your actions and agreements.
- Set and practice *rules of engagement* that foster open, candid, and caring conversations.

3. Understanding—appreciating others' perspectives, points of view, and ways of seeing the world strengthens bonds of trust. Listen and ask more questions. Minimize fighting for one's point of view and maximize exploring other's perspectives . . . *creating bridges into what's important to others*.

Actions:

- Make it a practice to ask for and listen to feedback from others who may not agree with your perspective and points of view.
- Ask “what if?” questions that open the doors to new ways of thinking without pre-judging the ideas of others that may be different than your own. And really LISTEN!

4. Shared Success—defining *success* with others creates a shared meaning about what's important and what is not for us to work on together. By defining *success* together, everyone contributes to co-creating the future we believe in . . . *creating a shared view of reality shapes the future with others*.

Actions:

- Initiate *conversations* about mutual success and *what success looks like for each of us*.
- Encourage people to communicate and discuss the *shared view of success* with others.

5. Truth-telling—speaking with *candor* and *caring*; and when misunderstandings occur, *taking risks* with courage and *facing reality* with openness to learn . . . *working and narrowing the reality gaps with others creates alignment and builds bonds of trust*.

Actions:

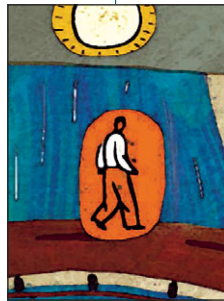
- When gaps between *your truth* and *my truth* appear, discuss them with the intent to create *bridges of understanding*.
- Hold and encourage conversations that start with empathy and move toward a common goal or outcome.

Before you try to spread *random acts of trust*, we suggest that you and your management team assess *what does a trusting organization look and feel like*. Creating a *trusting workplace* is an exhilarating and powerful experience.

Our powerful *DNA Assessment* helps you assess the trust level in your organization and build a *foundation of trust* that will guide your interactions with your employees, customers, vendors, and competitors, resulting in higher productivity and a sustained focus on achieving extraordinary goals. **LE**

Judith E. Glaser is CEO of Benchmark Communications, Chairman of the Creating WE Institute, and author of *Creating WE, The DNA of Leadership*, and *42 Rules for Creating WE*. Visit www.creatingwe.com.

ACTION: Boost the trust level in your enterprise.



to honor and respect how our we-centric brains respond to change, they will become champions of a new level of leadership that enables greater success both long- and short-term.

Our brains are complex biochemical networks and highways that enable signals to move up, down and around our whole body. While we think of our brain as one organ, it is not. We will simplify this complexity by providing a new context for you to reflect upon as you work to elevate your Change and Leadership IQ.

Conversational Intelligence

Everything happens through conversation. Here are *Five Leadership Success Strategies and Practices* that will trigger the natural changeability hardwired into our DNA—and enable you to become a *Facilitator of Change*. Identify the success strategies you are using, and decide which ones you want to use more of to expand your effectiveness as a leader:

1. See resistance in a new light. *Resistance* and *skepticism* are companions to change. It's almost impossible to ask people to do things differently without people pushing back and seeking to understand the implications of change on their lives. If we block questions or do not deal with them, we turn up the level of protection within our people and raise our perceived need to push harder. Yet too often we interpret the push back as *no* and we respond by trying to sell people on why change is good. Then when *tell or sell* doesn't work we resort to "yell" which can take the form of actual yelling at those who seem resistant, or we can turn to others and triangulation to influence our target resisters. Either way we are not dealing with *Resistance* productively or constructively. We are, in fact, fanning the flame and making resistance and fear a way of life.

• **Reframe:** To put *Conversational Intelligence* to work, stop thinking of your job as one of managing resistance and instead accepting resistance as a natural part of change. People need to challenge new ideas before they can accept them. For full ownership and accountability to take place, people need to *be in the conversation* about how to change rather than being asked to *merely comply*. When leaders make this reframe, they will see that conversations release new energy for change—which will propel their efforts forward faster.

2. Welcome and facilitate conversations. We underestimate the amount of dialogue and conversations people

need to feel comfortable and to understand what changes are being required, suggested or proposed. When people are afraid, they listen differently—they listen for the *implications* of how change will negatively impact them. While these may not be openly discussed, each person is having their own internal dialogue hypothesizing what these changes might be, and most often there is a huge fear of loss, rarely an anticipation of gain. People fear that through change they will be rejected, moved to lower positions or be asked to *leave the pack*. The **need to belong is strong**.

Everyone wants to be part of the winning team. *Our need to belong is stronger than almost any other need*.

Social Neuroscientists are now saying that the need to belong trumps the need for safety. They say that we are social beings and being part of a pack, a team, a group is so hardwired into our souls that it is what drives everything that has to do with culture and organization. When we feel rejected we react with more fear and resistance. When we feel we are part of the solution we find our place in supporting the solution.

• **Changing mindsets:** To put your *Conversational Intelligence* to work, create forums where people can have open, candid conversations to learn what is going on and where they belong in the newly emerging social order. *Transparency* and *openness* have a facilitative impact on transforming fears into constructive strategies for success. Putting the *feared implications* on the table and facilitating open discussions and conversations about *what's in it for them* and *why and how* changes are taking place, helps people shift their mindsets from loss to gain, from fear to hope, and from scarcity to abundance.

3. Engage head, heart and spirit.

People are emotional during change. Too often we fall into the trap of thinking that if we give employees the facts, and explain why economically change needs to take place, that they'll *buy into the change*. We overestimate the *power of logic* and underestimate the *power of storytelling*—an appeal to belonging and the positive emotions of belonging.

• **Storytelling:** To put *Conversational Intelligence* to work, use storytelling, a narrative to engage people's emotions and creativity to make change happen. Storytelling triggers the *head, heart and spirit* and causes us to *bond* not *fight*.

Oxytocin is a hormone that causes us to bond with others in times of stress

and change. Positive and uplifting storytelling increases the oxytocin level, which creates uplifting and positive outcomes from the ensuring conversations. The fearful "I's" become "WE's." When this happens, *individuals* become a *strong team* poised to work together to create change rather than be the objects of change. Narratives and stories help unite all *Heads, Hearts and Souls* together enabling a shared perspective and new set of possibilities for the future.

4. Create the space for change. Too often we want change to happen *fast*. We want to inject a serum and make the pain go away. We have *little patience* in living through change, and as a

result we move quickly into convergent decision making about what to change and how. We have each been a part of many Change management programs that end in a new set of policies that are disseminated to the organization with the belief that "zap" the culture will change or "shapeshift" into some-

thing new overnight. Proclamations and policy changes on paper are not change worthy practices for the fundamental changes in DNA that we are talking about.

• **Co-creating Conversations®.** To put your *Conversational Intelligence* to work, create conversational practices that enable you to work on *co-creating the future together*. These conversations are not about a quick fix or policy. This is not about *lecturing* or *tell-sell-yell* but about *practicing how to navigate with others* in and out of scenarios and alternatives from many perspectives to arrive at practices and rituals that *we* all embrace for how work gets done inside our culture. These conversations allow us to create a movie screen to project and explore scenarios for the future so we choose the best paths. We gain an understanding of others perspectives, enabling us to form a *We-view* rather than an *I-view* of the future.

Change Leaders must learn to create the conversational space for change, to reduce fears and threats, and to help people find their place in the change process. When this happens, we *breathe* in a coherent rather than a fearful way.

To *breathe* means to *aspire*. When we are calm and connected to others during change, our aspirations become greater and capabilities increase. LE

Judith E. Glaser is CEO of Benchmark Communications, Chairman of the Creating WE Institute, author of *Creating WE, The DNA of Leadership, 42 Rules for Creating WE*. www.creatingwe.com

ACTION: *Become a facilitator of change.*



Conversation Dashboards®

Realign your business for mutual success.



by Judith E. Glaser

WE ARE CONSTANTLY creating internal, invisible dashboards, like the control panel in your car, to understand the functioning of each person we encounter, whether it's an employee, a colleague, an associate, or just an acquaintance. Our dashboards tell us if a person is too judgmental and critical, or too selfish or out for their own interests at the expense of others, or if they are more "we-centric" and open to care about and share with others.

These instincts can be defined as **VITAL FORCES™**, and they determine whether or not we can trust someone, and open up to them, or if we need to withdraw and close down:

- **Fairness**—candor and openness about how we work out what is fair for each of us; how free from bias we are; how we handle conflict and treat people with equality.

- **Ownership**—willingness to clarify what is yours and what is mine—from physical property to *airtime* to ideas; what do we own, and what are our rules of engagement around ownership.

- **Reciprocity**—trading favors; positive action from one yielding positive actions to others.

- **Cooperation**—in what ways we join forces and work together on each other's behalf; taking turns, and working "with you" rather than "against you".

- **Expression**—giving each other space to speak our thoughts and express our voice; not feeling the pressure of forced consensus, rather freedom to speak.

- **Status**—where we stand relative to others; how might status be getting in the way of creating "power-with" others; how much importance we have in each other's eyes.

Team Interaction FORCES Drive Alignment. When teams work together to achieve larger organizational goals, *team dynamics* drive the process; making these dynamic forces visible can determine the teams success or failure.

When we interact with others we are keeping track of interaction dynamics, including levels of fairness and cooperation, monitoring how it will be to partner with the person, and how open colleagues are to both giving and receiving information.

Based on these internal measures, we build expectations about how trustworthy others may be—or how much we can trust them to come through for us. We trust those who care about us and are fair, are clear on ownership of tasks and responsibilities, reciprocate, cooperate, give us space and time to express what's on our mind, and value our contributions. We distrust those who do not play by these rules.

Dashboards

For years companies have used dashboards to show at a glance how well they're meeting their financial goals. A virtual dashboard on your office computer screen displays info that informs of a potential disaster (like plummeting sales metrics), or can give advanced insights into increased growth opportunities in untapped markets.

And the idea of using dashboards has spread to other departments besides finance. IT might use a dashboard to track various upgrades it has under way, legal might have one to monitor the status of contracts or litigation, and HR might employ theirs to display EEOC compliance metrics and labor costs.

All this is fine. But it does not go far enough. As a longtime executive coach and consultant, I think executives should use dashboards as a matter of course—and I will go even further: I believe CEOs and their teams should harness their power (as some of my clients have started to) to track qualitative issues as well as quantitative ones.

Working well together using Visible Dashboards. Dashboards are traditionally used to measure the hard stuff: How well are we doing at satisfying our customers? How much is plant utilization climbing? How much have we cut payroll?

But in the executive suite, trouble arises from *the inability of senior managers to work and play well with others*. This is where the dashboard comes in.

Rather than *make stuff up* about the level of trust or alignment with others, we can create visible dashboards of our trust and alignment and use them to enhance our communication with others. Creating visible dashboards gives us a language for discussing how we are feeling inside about others' senses of fair play, and how best to use this information to create better ways to communicate and relate with each other.

Three Ways to Drive Performance

Let me suggest three ways it could work between two executives, across a team of executives, and throughout a division or organization.

1: CTO/CFO alignment drives performance. Suppose it is absolutely critical that your CTO and CFO work well together to get out the next generation technology. You noticed delays. You heard some grumbling in the halls, but when you asked everyone how things were going, they glossed over the difficulties with a perfunctory "everything is just fine."

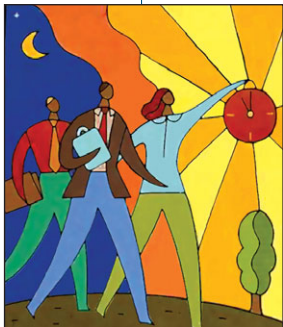
To find out where the problems lie, you create a dashboard with five questions to answer and ask them to highlight a NO answer with a red marker, KIND OF with a yellow marker and YES with a green marker.

- Do we agree on the level of resources needed to get the projects done?
- Do we share the same sense of urgency in implementing the project?
- Do we have sufficient communication to achieve our goals?
- Do we have mutual trust that deliverables will be completed on time?
- Do we have a shared understanding of our current business environment?

By comparing their dashboards, the places where one (or both of them) have marked red or yellow, identify misalignments they should discuss.

Too often people complain to others about what isn't working or blame the other party after the deadlines are missed. Instead of, "I think you dropped the ball," the opening line could be, "I see you don't think we have enough resources to get the job done. Tell me more."

2: C-suite agreements drive performance. At a broader level, you can have every member of the C-suite rate the organization on both its quantitative goals ("Will we meet our revenue targets for the quarter?") and qualitative ones ("Are we good at sharing infor-



mation?”). When you pinpoint an issue during a key project—at a stage when you can collaborate more easily on a solution instead of complaining after the fact—you create a different platform for success.

One CEO client, who rated everything across the board with “green,” was shocked to see all the reds and yellows on the dashboards of his colleagues. Once the team made the invisible visible, undercurrents of dissatisfaction and fear of confrontation gave way to conversations and a process for creating deeper understanding of one another’s perspectives on organizational change.

You’ll find that using dashboards helps identify blind spots—when you might think everything is fine, all the reds and yellows say otherwise.

Create Your Dashboard Starting Today

Through dashboards, we are able to put pictures and then words to the feelings we have inside about others being unfair with us, or others taking advantage of us, or others taking up too much airtime—all the exchanges that get us worried about how much we can trust and open up to others.

In a larger sense and most importantly, dashboards help us identify gaps where conversations can help bring reality more in line with expectations, increasing our chances to partner with others in a healthy and innovative way.

- Get your team together.
- Identify the key areas where alignment is vital.
- Create your Dashboard.
- Assess the VITAL FORCES that are either holding your team together or pushing them apart.
- Take action to close the gaps.

Create a Trusting Workplace

Creating a trusting workplace is one of the most exhilarating and powerful processes that leaders can experience—and *using dashboards to build trust is a powerful leadership competency* for the 21st century leader. Learning to make the invisible visible will help you build a foundation of trust that will guide your interactions with fellow employees, customers, vendors and even competitors. The result is higher levels of productivity, and sustained focus toward achieving *extraordinary goals*. LE

Judith E. Glaser is CEO of Benchmark Communications, Chairman of the Creating WE Institute, and author of *Creating WE, The DNA of Leadership, and 42 Rules for Creating WE*. Visit www.creatingwe.com.

ACTION: Use dashboards to drive performance.

Conversational Intelligence™

It has become a new leadership imperative.



by Judith E. Glaser

“To get to the next level of greatness, depends on the quality of the culture, which depends on the quality of the relationships, which depends on the quality of the conversations. Everything happens through conversations!”

— Judith E. Glaser

EVERYTHING HAPPENS THROUGH CONVERSATION. It’s what differentiates humans from other species and enables us to develop and handle complexity and ambiguity, to evolve and grow, and to teach others what we know. Conversation allows us to build common languages, definitions, and meanings that in turn create community. Conversations are the difference between trust and distrust, protection and innovation, exclusion and inclusion.

Conversations are how we connect and communicate with others. Words are not the things—they are representations and symbols we use to see, think and process our perceptions of reality with others. Yet few leaders understand how vital conversation is to the health and productivity of their culture. Unhealthy conversations are at the root of distrust, deceit, betrayal, and avoidance—which leads to lower productivity, innovation, and ultimately, lower success.

By understanding how language triggers different parts of the brain and stimulates certain habits and behaviors, leaders can develop their *Conversational Intelligence* to build *healthier, more resilient organizations* in the face of change.

A seemingly simple act such as talking with a colleague—a small momentary exchange of words in a hallway—has the ability to alter someone’s life permanently. Phrases like “I can’t do that!” and “If I only knew how!” may take only seconds to utter, but they can be life changing. There is little connection between the time it takes to say the words and the lasting impact they may have on a person, a relationship, or an organization.

Why do we need to understand Conversational Intelligence?

1. *Conversational Intelligence gives us the power to influence our Neuro-chemistry.* Every conversation we have with another person is chemical. Conversations have the power to change the brain—stimulate the production of hormones and neurotransmitters, stimulate body systems and nerve pathways, and change our body’s chemistry, not just for a moment, but for a life time.

At the simplest level, we say something and we get a response—I ask you a question and you tell me the answer. However, conversations can quickly become more complex as questions provoke thoughts and feelings about what you mean or your intentions, which stir the neuro-chemistry and chemical networks into action.

If our questions feel threatening, we do more than answer; we activate networks inside the brain to “handle” the threat.

2. *Conversational Intelligence gives us the power to express our inner thoughts and feelings.* As we communicate, we read the content and emotions being sent. Conversations are more than the information we share or words we

speak. They are a way to package our feelings about ourselves, our world, and others. As leaders, we communicate *sad* or *happy* with almost every conversation. As we understand the power of language in regulating how people feel every day, and the role language plays in evolving the brain’s capacity to expand perspectives and create a “feel good” experience, then we can shape the workplace in profound ways.

3. *Conversational Intelligence gives us the power to influence how we interpret reality.* Conversations impact different parts of the brain in different ways, because different parts of the brain are listening for different things. By understanding how conversations impact our listening we can develop the power to determine how we listen—and how we listen determines how we interpret and make sense of everything.



Our Five Brains

1. Listening for Threats: The amygdala, part of the reptilian brain—the part of the brain that protects us from harm—is listening for words and meanings that might threaten us. When threatened, our fear-networks become activated. This part of the brain reacts more quickly than others. And if the level of fear hormones is high it prevents the thinking parts of our brain from playing a more active role. When this part of our brain masters us we exhibit “fight, flee, freeze or appease” behaviors. Tribalism or territorial behavior is also a reaction to threats from other groups.

2. Listening to Belong: The limbic brain, among other things, is listening for words that tell us if our needs for belonging are being met. This part of the brain gives us access to emotions and helps us process them. Emotions make us feel happy, or if our needs are unmet, cause us to feel sad or angry. This part of our brain also stores memories and provides us with ways to recall and process what we are experiencing through memories from the past. This part of our brain provides social context. We hold and store memories for every person we meet and the limbic brain enables us to form our groups, and develop social norms with them.

3. Listening to be Successful: The neocortex helps us “grasp” what is going on, and to comprehend what people mean. The neocortex is where we put words to feelings and make sense or give meaning to conversations; it’s where we listen to understand and to translate our understanding into success strategies. This is where we learn to form abstractions and generalizations; we learn to translate what is going on in the lower brain by translating these feelings and emotions into words. It is also where we express ourselves and open up to others to get what we need from them.

4. Listening for Truth: The prefrontal cortex enables us to see the world from another person’s point of view, empathize with those experiences, and identify the gaps between reality and our expectations. This part of our brain provides us with higher-level strategies for processing complex situations and for making difficult decisions. When we are overly emotional, our prefrontal cortex enables us to quell the amygdala

when it’s upset. This is where healthy conversations are sustained.

5. Listening to Connect: Finally, the “heart” brain, the most scientifically controversial part of our brain network helps create connectivity through chemicals and energy fields. There are far more pathways from the heart to the brain which suggests messaging from the heart has either an informative or regulatory role on the brain. From this heart/brain synchronization we either open up or close down with others as we are having conversations.

A Business Case for Mindfulness

How can you create the conversational space that creates deeper understanding and engagement rather than fear and avoidance? Take three action steps:

1. Remember, be mindful of your conversations and the emotional content you bring—either pain or pleasure. Are you sending friend or foe messages? Are you sending the message “you can trust me to have your best interest at heart” or “I want to persuade you to think about things my way?” When you’re aware of these meta-messages, you can create a safe culture allowing all parties to interact at the highest level, sharing perspectives, feeling, and aspirations and elevating insights and wisdom.

2. Remember, conversations have the ability to trigger emotional reactions.

Conversations carry meaning—and meaning is embedded in the listener even more than in the speaker. Words either cause us to bond and trust more fully and think of others as friends and colleagues, or they will cause us to break rapport and think of others as enemies. Your mind will open up as you see the connection between language and health, and you’ll learn how to create healthy organizations through your conversational rituals.

3. Remember, the words we use in our conversations are rarely neutral. Words have histories informed by years of use. Each time another experience overlays another meaning on a word it all gets collected in our brain to be activated during conversations. Knowing how we project meaning into our conversations will enable us to connect with others and, in so doing, let go of much of the self-talk that diverts us from working together effectively. LE

Judith E. Glaser is CEO of Benchmark Communications, Chairman of the Creating WE Institute, author of *Creating WE*, *The DNA of Leadership*, *42 Rules for Creating WE*. www.creatingwe.com

ACTION: Develop your conversational intelligence.



Conversational Intelligence Summary

With Conversational Intelligence™ leaders and employees will be able to “architect conversations” to create higher levels of trust, accountability, and improved business results.

With CI As a platform, organizations learn not only to adapt to change—they learn to lead change!

Our pioneering approach is a multi-learning platform including: executive briefings, classroom learning, online web-based modules, learning summits, team challenges, executive coaching, peer coaching organizational consulting and certifications.

Contact us to learn how you can transform your culture into an innovation engine.

DNA Assessment and Consult

The DNA Assessment is a one of a kind tool for identifying your cultural DNA for Success. Leaders can quickly see what dynamics drive their success, and can spot what is preventing them from achieving their mission, goals and strategies.

Who Benefits: The DNA Assessment is best used by Executive Teams, Divisional Teams, and Organizations of all sizes.

CONTACT us for a mini-DNA Assessment and Consult.

Judith E. Glaser, CEO
212-307-4386

Jeglaser@creatingwe.com
www.creatingwe.com



FREE
Assessment & Consult
www.CreatingWE.com/LE



When trust
is missing
everything
else ...
disappears



FOUNDED BY

Benchmark

COMMUNICATIONS, INC.

CreatingWE.com

(212) 307-4386

JEGlaser@CreatingWE.com
Judith E. Glaser, CEO & Founder

Everything happens through conversations!™

Build trust within your teams and become more innovative, collaborative, and co-creative using **breakthrough, pioneering** tools and techniques. Our formula for success – **Conversational Intelligence™!**

Call us to learn more about our new approaches for catalyzing innovation, increasing organizational performance, building trust and transparency and more ...

Who will benefit?

- Organizations of all sizes undergoing change
- CEOs, senior executives and their teams looking for insights and breakthroughs to enhance collaboration and organizational performance
- Executives leading innovation teams
- Executive, team and organizational coaches
- Organizational development consultants, HR executives & learning professionals

Visit CreatingWE.com/LE for a **FREE** assessment & consult.