



The Practice of Transformation

Enabling Fundamental Transformation of the Self,
the Organization and the Society:
A Four-World Approach

Part Two

By Ronnie Lessem and Alexander Schieffer

The “Practice” in the title concerns transforming ourselves with the help of a unique process, culminating in a new form of enterprise. We thereby liberate the potential of people, organizations and societies.

Distinctive to this transformative approach is the link between the indigenous and the exogenous, where the local leads and the global follows. It is an approach that taps into the wisdom of the four corners of the world, and hence is embedded in the four worlds of the South, the East, the North and the West. In this worldly frame we always root transformation first within a local context and in local wisdom, before it encounters evolving global knowledge.

This framework also provides the basis for a unique program for mastering social and economic transformation, a program that helps build and support people who are willing to engage in deep transformation. Our program is already underway in South Africa, Jordan, and the UK.

The “Practice of Transformation” — which is embedded in a most coherent and integral transformational architecture — is built on seven fundamentals:

- 1) Forces
- 2) Foundations
- 3) Flows
- 4) Fields
- 5) Functions
- 6) Form
- 7) Freedom

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Transformation Flows: Life, Leadership and Learning Rhythms of Transformation

The Transformational Flows (Life, Leadership and Learning) that underlie the rhythm and cycles of transformation in the Fields are themselves rooted in natural laws and cultural knowledge. The Flow is the fundamental, most specifically embodying the interplay between the indigenous and the exogenous. The most generic, underlying flow embodying all other flows is the GENE (Grounding, Emerging, Navigating and Effecting).

GENE, the Life Flow

The transformational forces and foundations are of no use on their own. Without a process through which they are brought alive and become generative, and without fields where they can be applied, they can become counter-productive in the long term and lead to either an ossification (indigenous imbalance) or domination (exogenous imbalance) of the person, institution and community. There now has to be a transformation flow. We have identified that process of flow in its generic form as one of a GENE, going through four stages: Grounding; Emerging; Navigating; and Effecting. Moreover, as in the pupa stage, with the caterpillar becoming transformed, this is the point at which the local needs to let go of its old self, in order to merge with the non-local, but not to forget its origins in the process.

The state of self, organizational and societal Grounding, as we shall see, follows from the dual static/dynamic script of the Vital force. Emergence is dependent upon a process of purposeful fusion between local force and global — trans/cultural — foundations, mediated not by the “triple bottom line”, but by the triple personal-institutional-communal grounds. After this stage of Grounding, something has to give, creating the impetus for transformation, and that impulse has to come from the outside. This is the dynamic process that follows the static grounding stage. As such there is dissolution of the old, for without an opening out to change through the influence of an external agency, there is simply no transformational flow. The axis needs to spin out of its original moorings in order for the transformation to emerge as a process.

GROUNDING	EMERGING	NAVIGATING	EFFECTING
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After the first two G-E stages of Grounding and Emerging, the process now has to evolve to a stage where it forms itself as a Navigating entity. We saw that without this process of externalizing, the transformation process remained incomplete. Finally, the fourth strand concerns the process Effecting itself through an integration of the previous three stages, manifesting concretely in the physical world. Like a hologram, it embodies the three other stages within itself. Moreover, the four stages are alternately static and dynamic, one following the other in a rhythmic orientation.

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Complemented by Two Further Flows: Leadership and Learning

The flow of the GENE, then, is our generic transformational flow. At the same time, we also introduce a specific and outer directed “leadership flow”. Here we find our orientation in the transformational journeys of exceptional transformative leaders such as Nelson Mandela. The fourfold logic for the leadership flow is based on man’s life seasons⁸, starting with adolescence and its formative stage, to young adulthood and its reformative stage, moving to mid-life and the normative stage, and finally reaching at maturity to its transformative stage.

We have added yet another — this time, inner-directed — flow, the “learning flow”, and we have done it for two reasons. On the one hand, the learning flow needs to tap equally into local (indigenous) and global (exogenous) knowledge. *While the root of the learning flow is in the indigenous knowledge base and in the feeling mode, the learner, by going through the learning flow, reaches out to exogenous knowledge, creatively combing local/global knowledge sources and ultimately implanting the newly generated knowledge in his/her local context.* On the other hand the learner goes into a parallel fourfold learning cycle, which is based on the modes of experiencing, imagining, conceptual and practical. If those cycles are completed, the final mode, acting, is then based on a fully contextualized local/global knowledge source and that’s what makes transformational learning ultimately fruitful. While there are certainly more transformational flows to discover, we feel that these three flows (Life, Leadership and Learning) are the most relevant for us.

Transformational Fields: Our Triple Bottom Line

Moving on through the transformational architecture, we now refer to the fields of transformation. Transformational Fields of Self, Organization and Society are the subjects to which the transformational flows are simultaneously applied: formatively, re-formatively, newly normatively, and ultimately transformatively.

The fields serve to distinguish between individual, organizational, and societal being, as the initial grounds, for the particular transformation at hand. All such personal, institutional and communal grounds, moreover, need to consciously acknowledge, and purposefully draw upon, the local forces and trans-cultural foundations that underlie them. We shall now take each of them separately.

Self: The transformation field at the level of self, standing on original ground, subsequently and potentially manifests itself through a process of self-actualization. We refer to the four stages of life as the evolving theatre of the transformation process. From a similar perspective we take the transformation field as rooted in *Being*; subsequently *Becoming*; *Knowing*; and ultimately and accumulatively *Doing*. From the four worlds perspective, Being is the Southern level of Grounding; Becoming is the Eastern level of Emerging; Knowing is the Northern world of Navigating, and Doing is the Western world of Effecting. Each of the four worlds is crucial to the full development

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of a personality. However, the grounds of Being is where it all starts, albeit drawing upon the forces and foundations that have originally come before.

BEING	BECOMING	KNOWING	DOING
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Organization: Similarly, at the organizational level, the field of transformation manifests itself through an equivalent four worlds that define the dimensions of productivity and responsibility it has. First, the very Grounds on which it stands, its fundamental Being, is *animate*, that is, lodged in nature. Because that *pioneering* fact of nature tends to be forgotten, our Earth is being plundered and climate change is already beginning to wreak havoc on the world. Second, it has a *civic* responsibility to maintain and develop, continually *renewing* its people and the very culture upon which it stands. Third, it must have a *public* side, in terms of its relevance as a public institution and its working for the common good, internally and externally, by *consolidating* upon prior gains. Finally, an organization needs to be commercially viable and profitable, and that is what we refer to as its *private* dimension, effectively *implementing* what has been developed and conceived. However, bereft of the animate grounds on which it stands, there will be no organizational field, as it were, to play on.

PIONEERING	RENEWAL	CONSOLIDATION	IMPLEMENTATION
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Society: In a similar way, finally, the societal field is located in the four culturally held philosophies of humanism, holism, rationalism and pragmatism. The humanistic, for us inclusive of the “more-than-human” world, is the very grounds of our societal being, the impulse for creating and sustaining human communities. The holistic impulse, which builds upon it, refers to the society as a totality; the rational impulse is about the role of procedures and institutions, while the pragmatic impulse promotes the interests of the individual in the society. This “four-folding” appears, moreover, in the four fields of environmentalism, culturalism, socialism, and capitalism. While there has been an excessive focus on the bi-polar axis of capitalism-socialism until recently and on the uni-polar capitalist axis for the last decade, environmentalism and culturalism have been all but ignored. This means that all societies have stood on shaky grounds, arising in turn out of a poorly conceived local Identity and an ill conceived trans-national Unity. In fact, within the UK where two of us are based, the ill-shapen unity between the English and the Scots, the Welsh, and the Irish is one of the reasons for the trans-national malaise within Britain as a whole.

ENVIRONMENTALISM	CULTURALISM	SOCIALISM	CAPITALISM
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In an interview with Peter Brew, Director of the International Business Leaders Forum (IBLF), while talking about the setup of the IBLF in China, the interconnectedness of the Fields became apparent: “... I only really came to realize the significance, and potential, of China Business Leaders Forum’s role when

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I heard your own life story. I would add, for me, even greater richness is to be gained by knowing China's life story, so to speak. So the real power and potential lies, for me, in re-sourcing business, at one and the same time, in a particular developing self (Peter) and a particular developing society (China) ..."⁹

Transformative Functions: Community to Sustainability

We now come to the fifth fundamental — in fact, the one that serves to inform hundreds of MBA, business and economic studies, programs, and thousands of textbooks that have been written, mostly in America. At a very explicit level within the overall transformation process are found the four functions of transformation.

In the South we have the function of Community Building. Vitalized, as such, by the force of *ntu*, it is unified, and thereby connected with other worldly foundations, through the practice of *Ubuntu*¹⁰. In the recognition and practice of building a community on the basis of this ancient principle of mutuality, Ubuntu gives us a dynamic model for reconciling human with human, and human with the earth, that sustains us. In the East we have the function of Conscious Evolution. We have chosen *Kyosei* as the vitalizing principle of conscious evolution, as it provides a rich context for co-existence, while, arguably, transcendental consciousness, from Vedic wisdom, provides a unifying force. Canon's famous former President, Ryuzaburo Kaku, stated: "A company practicing kyosei establishes harmonious relations with its customers, suppliers and competitors, as well as with the government with which it deals, and the natural environment. When practiced by a group of corporations, kyosei can become a powerful force for social, political and economic transformation."¹¹ In the North the transformation function is Knowledge Creation. Here we have chosen the Swedish concept of *Naringsliv*, or the "nourishment for life", as the principal vitalizing and, indeed, unifying force and foundation. Finally, in the West we have Sustainable Development. Here the principle, again both vitalizing and unifying, is that of Individuation, the process through which we actualize as individuals, organizations and societies.

COMMUNITY BUILDING	CONSCIOUS EVOLUTION	KNOWLEDGE CREATION	SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
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Each of these functions creates transformation at the three levels of self, organization, and society as follows:

Self: Ubuntu transforms the static component of communication to community building; Kyosei transforms consciousness to conscious evolution; Naringsliv transforms competence to knowledge creation; and Individuation transforms capability to sustainable individual development.

Organization: Ubuntu transforms what we commonly refer to as marketing to community building; Kyosei transforms the former human resources to conscious evolution; Naringsliv transforms operations to knowledge creation; and Individuation transforms finance to sustainable development.

Society: Ubuntu transforms the static focus on land to that of community building; from labor in the East we move to consciously evolving our societies;

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from technology we shift to knowledge creation; and in the West we transform capital to sustainable economic and societal development. We then turn, penultimately, to form.

Transformed Form: Micro and Macro

The unified, rather than separated, functions serve to create a newly transformative and balanced civic, animate, public, private form of enterprise, opening the door to realizing the full transformative GENE-ius of all fields, harnessed by a newly constituted enterprise and GENE-uine entrepreneur.

We have now reached a critical stage in our transformational journey. For it is now that we explicitly part company from the two conventional wisdoms, macro and micro, that underlie mainstream management education and research, such as business and public administration on the one hand (micro), and developmental or environmental studies on the other (macro). Our transformed form is, so to speak, such all-round functionality, that it is GENE-uine enterprise and entrepreneurship. What does all this mean?

In effect, and through our navigation, we focus, from a micro institutional perspective, on the animate and the civic, the public and the private. From our transformational point of view, then, the nature and scope of any institution has to be all-encompassing, in the above sense. A private enterprise needs to progressively evolve through public, civic and animate institutional forms.

PUBLIC	ANIMATE	CIVIC	PRIVATE
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Similarly, from a macro perspective, a society needs to encompass the full range of its natural Southern environmentalism, culturally laden Eastern culturalism, political Northern socialism and economically laden Western capitalism. Altogether, and from a combined macro and micro perspective, such sectoral differentiation needs to be followed by integration, whereby the political and the economic emerges out of the natural and the cultural. The whole focus of institutions and communities, together with the individuals within, requires such a newly all-encompassing focus.

NATURAL	CULTURAL	POLITICAL	ECONOMIC
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Such a mature focus, as is probably evident, flies in the face of current trends, where the economic, if not also the political, puts pride of place over the natural and the cultural. Across the institutional board, we are implying that the animate and the civic come prior to the public and the private, as is evident for a company like Sekem in Egypt, and which is also why BP, in recent years, sees itself moving beyond petroleum.

This is also stressed by Nicanor Perlas, proclaiming a different shape of globalization, who regards the emergence of global civil society as the greatest social innovation of our time: "The emergence of global civil society, for Perlas, changes the world from a uni-polar or bi-polar to a tri-polar one.

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From 1945-1989, humanity lived in a bi-polar world, created by the cold war between the economic forces of capitalism and the political power of communism. After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the bi-polar world started to ebb away. The subsequent 'Battle of Seattle', with the World Trade Organization some ten years later, had then been preceded by years of work by global civil society. Such as society has broken down the monopoly of the neo-liberal, capitalist-centred discourse on globalization. Civil society, in an act of cultural rebellion, re-framed the whole globalization debate in terms of values and meaning, thereby birthing a new history."¹²

We now turn to our ultimate transformation.

Transforming Freedom: The Liberation Power of Transformation

The seventh and final fundamental of transformation is freedom. While the reader might be surprised to be introduced to freedom as the final destination of the transformational journey, we would like to remind you that freedom was the ultimate goal of all transformative agents of all times, over all cultures, whether in the spiritual, in the educational, in the public, or even in the entrepreneurial world. Transformation's goal has always been to liberate the person, the organization, or the society from inner and outer constraints. When we talk here about freedom we talk about liberating people's potential through transformative education and about freeing societies through social innovation.

Having released the GENE-ius of Transformation we have also closed the triangle of individual local identity and integral global unity, culminating in a new form of enterprise and society, integrating the animate, the civic, the public, and the private, driven by a new version of GENE-uine entrepreneurship. An individual who has undertaken this journey has further developed his/her entrepreneurial artistry, set alongside the science for social and economic transformation. Such a person has a deepened sense for his/her own, his/her organization's or his/her society's vital forces, and the understanding that to keep this endless transformational process going and to continue evolving at higher developed forms it is important to stay connected to these forces, nurture them in local/global foundations, and apply the transformative flows ever more consciously to the fields of the individual, the organization and the society. This involves the newly developed functions of Community Building, Conscious Evolution, Knowledge Creation and Sustainable Development, set within a new form of environmental, civic, public and private enterprise, dedicated to freeing the potential of self, organization and society.

Transforming a World on Fire

We have failed to come to terms with the breadth, depth, and life span of our selves, our organizations and our societies. By, for example, excluding one side of our individual (Judeo-Christian) selves from the other collective (Islamic), the latter in its distorted Bin Laden form has become, as it was for Carl Gustav Jung, a destructive "shadow". As such, our local identity, whether Islamic, Christian, Buddhist or Confucian, has remained set apart from our global integrity. Arguably, on September 11, 2001 that destructive shadow wreaked

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havoc upon us as the negative aspect of collectivism: embodied in a distorted version of Islam, it unleashed its vengeance on the individualistic Judeo-Christian world. Whereas at one level this was an act of wanton terrorism, at another level this was a cry from the dark. Or indeed a scream from the collective wilderness. Such a wilderness is the desolate land that the Afghans inhabit, and other local communities like them. Could it be that such a dreadful event represents a wake-up call to the isolationist individualism of the West, just as communism might have been in its formative days a century ago?

From a psychological perspective, transformation is life's natural process of reaching over to the shadow, or the under-developed side, in order to evolve to completion. In that sense, transformation is part of life's natural strategy to seek wholeness. It is as much an intelligence emerging out of the need to survive. The mythologist and storyteller Joseph Campbell has likened transformation to a rise in feminine consciousness, with its focus on cooperation, harmony, creativity and inventiveness. From Jung, we know that this so-called feminine side is the shadow of the dominant masculine principle and that the fullness of becoming human is revealed in the masculine reaching over to incorporate the feminine. Mid-life, according to Jung, is the stage of the individual life when this imploring to unite with the shadow side takes place.¹³

We refer to this stage as the break in the story that is equally evident in organizations and societies. Both settle into a form that works for them and become large and develop. Then they eventually reach a stage where they begin to drift away from the story: the story here symbolizes and encapsulates the vision, and the very uniqueness of culture and identity that made the growth possible. That is the stage where they have to transform in order to renew and regenerate themselves. Failure to do that results in the originally creative form becoming dysfunctional and subject to entropy. Societies that do not engage in transformation at this stage can either become ruthlessly self-centered or lose all sense of direction and purpose. They can also become fundamentalist and isolated, the complete reversal of transformation. And when there is no willful or conscious transformation on the part of the members of the organization or society, the job of transforming is handed over to entropy.

In reality, this is precisely what is happening both in the natural and cultural domains. The pragmatic West has lost touch with its roots in the natural South; the rational North has become disconnected from its journey from the catalytic East, the East itself has spun out of control trying to accommodate an overpowering West, and the South remains impoverished.

The crucial point is that transformation is a natural process and it occurs at all levels of life, including in the forms we have created, such as our societies. We are at a moment in our history as human beings, and in the history of the planet as a whole, where we can make the choice to engage in a process of transforming ourselves as a species, our institutions and organizations, and our societies as a whole.

If we do not, we remain subjected to the footprint of entropy. We can take advantage of the awareness we now have of the past choices we made and the results they created to choose a different future. Indeed, our future will depend on the choice we make now; either we remain embedded in the vagaries and dictates of unconscious responses that were once necessary for survival

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and that continue to dominate us, or we willfully and consciously engage in transformation. It is as simple as that. Today we hold the knowledge, awareness, and potential to do just that; we also hold the power to destroy everything around us. Human consciousness has been the result of millions of years of evolution and the great transformations that have taken place, naturally and culturally. We carry these residues and the potential to engage in collaborative endeavors to decide our future. But we also carry the imprints of destructive behavior. It is no longer a question of which will win out in the long run; the essential question is whether we can engage in conscious transformation.

Conclusion: Liberation by (the Practice of) Transformation

The fundamentals of transformation that we have identified as a means of realizing individual, organizational and societal GENE-ius, are not just another set of business or leadership principles to rival those of Tom Peters or Stephen Covey. Rather, they serve to underlie a transformed program of management education and research, and of business and societal functioning. It is a program that aims for the liberation of individual and collective potential.

We will follow the seven-fold sequence, which we have now introduced, that sets the overall local-global (indigenous-exogenous) tone for our approach to transformation:

I. FORCES: Vital Forces in a particular self, organization or society initiate the transformative process, individually and collectively, and provide the indigenous, primary, natural and cultural spark for social and economic transformation. It is here where the transformational GENE-ius is activated.

II. FOUNDATIONS: Transformative Foundations (Nature and Culture), on a global basis, form the exogenous and secondary base for the transformational journey and nourish the vital forces. It is here where the process starts reaching out to the exogenous knowledge of the world, drawing simultaneously on the South, the East, the North and the West.

III. FLOWS: Transformational Flows define the rhythm and cycles of transformation in the Fields. They are themselves rooted in natural laws and cultural knowledge. The most generic, underlying flow embodying all other flows is the GENE (Grounding, Emerging, Navigating and Effecting).

IV. FIELDS: Transformational Fields of Self, Organization and Society are the subjects to which the transformational flows are simultaneously applied: formatively, re-formatively, newly normatively and ultimately transformatively.

V. FUNCTIONS: Transforming the fields results in unifying the local/global Functions of a Self, an Organization and a Society, in Community Building, Conscious Evolution, Knowledge Creation and Sustainable Development.

VI. FORM: The unified, rather than separated, self-, organization- and society-based functions serve to create newly transformative and balanced civic, animate, public, and private forms of enterprise, opening the door to realizing the full transformative GENE-ius of all fields, harnessed by a newly constituted GENE-uine enter-prise and entre-preneur. On a macro level we are heading for an animate focus on environmentalism, a civic focus on culturalism, a public

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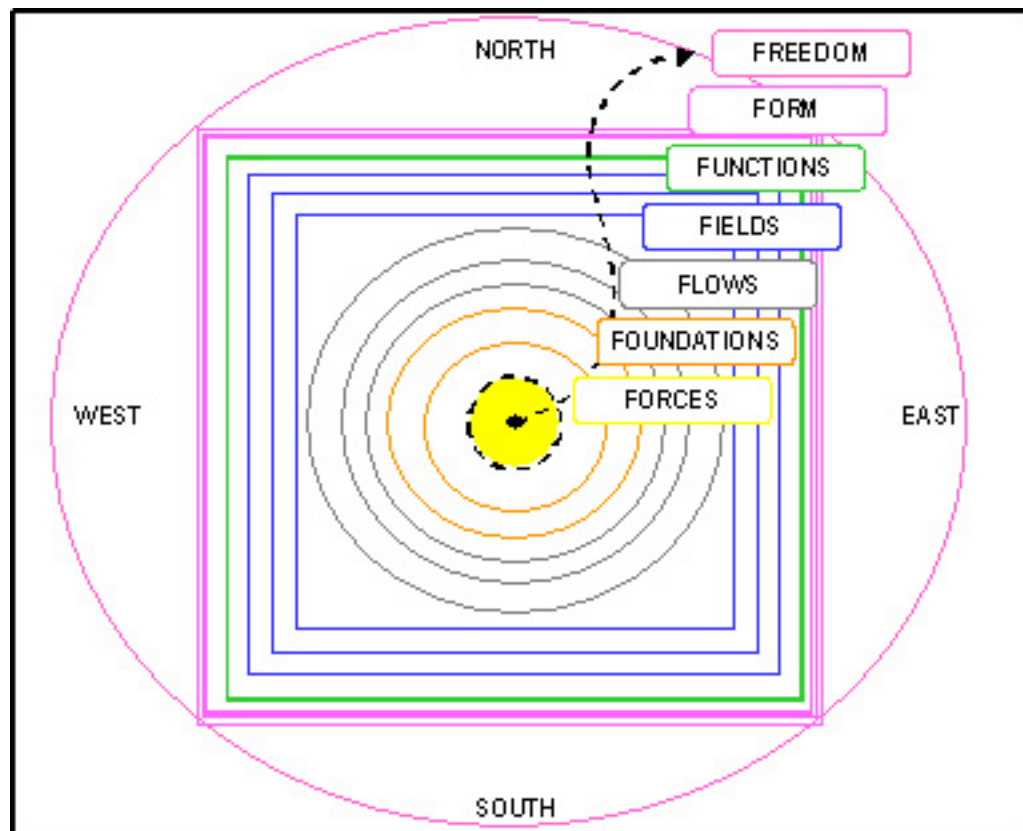
focus on socialism, and a private focus on capitalism, with all having an equal part to play in the institutional and societal whole.

VII. FREEDOM: Freedom embodies the transformational journey, liberating people, organizations and societies, who are newly connected to their globally integral foundations and locally vital forces and who have overcome the disconnect between self (selves), organization(s) and society(ies).

The transformation journey, in summary, is about:

- *Activating the GENE-ius of yourself, your organization and your society by accessing your own, your organization's and your society's inner vital force of transformation.*
- *Working yourself through the Fundamentals of Transformation.*
- *Drawing consciously upon the wisdom of the Four Worlds, reaching out from your individual local identity towards integral global unity and, through this integration, deepening your mastery of GENE-uine entrepreneurship, hence building GENE-uine enterprises.*

The following figure gives a full overview on the transformation architecture. It shows the seven fundamentals, embedded in the four worlds. This figure may act as a compass for the journey:



The Seven Fundamentals embedded in the Four Worlds

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About The Authors

Dr. Ronnie Lessem, an Afro-European and a graduate of Harvard Business School and the London School of Economics, is the Dean of G-Salt Global School for African Leadership and Transformation at CIDA Campus, Johannesburg, and a Director of the Trans-cultural Centre and Trans-cultural Programs at the University of Buckingham in the UK. He runs, together with his colleagues Alexander Schieffer and Sudhanshu Palsule, a doctoral and masters program in Social and Economic Transformation in the UK, the Middle East and South Africa. He has written some twenty books on self, organizational and societal transformation. He has also been a consultant to international companies on organizational learning and knowledge creation, and on managing across cultures, and has been an Adjunct Professor at IMD in Switzerland, Wits Business School and CIDA University in South Africa.

Dr. Alexander Schieffer is managing partner of CELL Center of Excellence for Leadership and Learning (www.c-cell.com). He lectures at St. Gallen University in Switzerland as well as at the CIDA Campus in Johannesburg, South Africa. Prior to CELL, he had founded and built up one of the leading special interest publishing houses in Singapore. Together with Ronnie Lessem and Sudhanshu Palsule he is currently setting up TRANSOM, a Global Institute on Social and Economic Transformation (www.trans-4-m.com), committed to further developing a highly innovative educational approach addressed to leaders from all sectors of society.

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Academy Phone 805 640-3713 • Fax 805 640-9914 • Website www.worldbusiness.org
Senior Editor, David Zweig, davidz@worldbusiness.org Phone 510 547-3223